Labour imperialism or democratic internationalism? U.S. trade unions and the conflict in El Salvador and Nicaragua, 1981-1989

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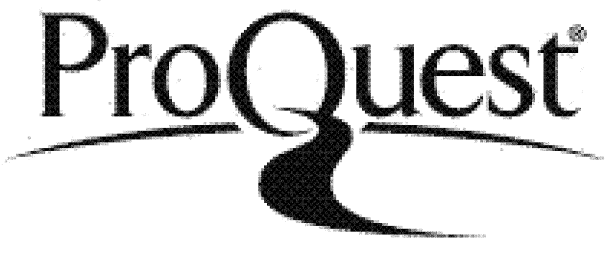

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For my late brother, Peter

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an empirical study of a conflict within U.S. labour during the 1980s over U.S. Government and trade union policy towards Nicaragua and El Salvador. It demonstrates how the American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) actively supported U.S. Government objectives in these two countries by providing political and financial support for anti-Sandinista unions in Nicaragua and moderate unions in El Salvador. It shows how this type of trade union intervention (which some commentators have termed "labour imperialism") has had a serious impact in Central America and in numerous other locations historically.

As the 1980s progressed, trade union opposition to U.S. foreign policy increased. With it came a challenge to the AFL-CIO's "democratic internationalism." This thesis pays particular attention to the form, method and ideology (or, rather, ideologies) of this challenge and how it was spearheaded by activists and lower-level union officials, many of whom had been part of the 1960s anti-war movement. It shows how an alternative internationalism emerged from a network of "anti-intervention" committees and caucuses who forged links with the pro-Sandinista

unions and the left unions in El Salvador.

This thesis argues that the serious proportions of this conflict can be attributed to the collapse of the Keynesian "social pact" between U.S. business, government, and organised labour which had hitherto sustained the AFL-CIO's active "Cold War unionism." The political and economic attacks on U.S. unions, and the changed structural relationship of U.S. workers to the world economy, has altered the perceptions of many in the U.S. labour movement regarding the role of the U.S. Government, the multinational corporations and the significance of challenges to U.S. hegemony abroad.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the controversy within the trade unions of the United States concerning the crises in Nicaragua and El Salvador during the period 1981-89. During this time the conflict in Central America and U.S. labour's policy in the region emerged as a key source of tension within the American Federation of Labour - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). These issues frequently provoked discussion and activity (at local, state, and national levels) that was more contentious than was the case with any other trade union concern. At the AFL-CIO's full convention in 1985, more resolutions were submitted on Central America than on any other issue. Particularly striking is the fact that this struggle gathered momentum at a time when the U.S. labour movement faced a degree of political marginalisation, membership shrinkage, and general disorientation not seen since the 1920s. At first glance, then, the concern with international issues might be interpreted as the fiddling of trade union leaders while the "House of Labor" burned. I will argue below that this is not the case - although an element of this is, in one sense, true. The struggle in U.S. labour over Central America was, I will argue, indicative of growing dissatisfaction of a layer of trade unionists with the general

direction (or lack of it) of the labour movement. Moreover, it reflected the impact of revolutionary challenges to U.S. hegemony in places like Central America has had on U.S. labour and political life in general.

The account below also unveils how the official bodies of the AFL-CIO, particularly the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), have played a highly significant role in El Salvador and Nicaragua since the insurrectionary period of 1979-1980. This thesis demonstrates how the AFL-CIO's intervention broadly (and often specifically) served the objectives of the Reagan Administration regarding both of these countries. Indeed, these interventions were largely financed by the U.S. Government through the U.S. Department of State and, after 1984, also through the Congressionally-funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

In the case of Nicaragua, the AFL-CIO consciously and unswervingly pursued a course of active and frequently vociferous opposition to the left-wing Sandinista government. This opposition involved a concerted campaign of vilification of the Sandinistas within the U.S. labour movement as well as active intervention in Nicaragua itself. Furthermore, the AFL-CIO's official position on Nicaragua facilitated the transfer of large sums of U.S. Government money to trade union entities in Nicaragua who opposed the revolutionary government from the right, as well as active collusion between U.S. labour functionaries with Oliver North's project to secure a steady flow of arms to the armed counter-revolution (contras).

Regarding El Salvador, the AFL-CIO actively assisted trade unions who supported the Christian Democrats and opposed the Left. During the 1980s, thousands of trade unionists were assassinated in El Salvador by the U.S.- funded and trained armed forces and the so-called "death squads." In accordance with Administration policy, the AFL-CIO resisted efforts to reduce or terminate U.S. aid to the Salvadoran armed forces, arguing that El Salvador under the Christian Democrats constituted a fledgling democracy struggling to survive Marxist-Leninist guerilla violence from the Left and right-wing "death squad" violence from the right. In order to counter forces in and beyond Congress and in the labour movement who challenged this view, the AFL-CIO downplayed and sometimes denied the fact that the Salvadoran military had been involved in a routine extermination of its trade union and other opponents.

The AFL-CIO's active role in these two countries broadly conforms to the pattern established by the Federation throughout the postwar period. As is explained in greater detail below, this policy rested on collaboration with U.S. Government agencies and a strict adherence to Cold War priorities. Since 1949, U.S. labour has implacably opposed the Soviet Union in international affairs. Equally if not more significant, the AFL-CIO has actively obstructed any trade union or working class political activity that promoted a class-struggle ideology, ostensibly because such activity inevitably led to manipulation by "communists." The other

important feature of AFL-CIO postwar foreign policy, however, involved a largely uncritical approach to the international role of U.S. capital. Indeed, U.S. business' overseas investments were viewed to be beneficial to both U.S. workers in that they stimulated demand for U.S.-made products and helped maintain the overall health of the U.S. economy, and to overseas (especially Third World) workers in that the penetration of U.S. investment and the expansion of international trade also stimulated economic growth and development. The latter was expected to derail any movement to the left in the recipient countries.

Not surprisingly, the "Cold War unionism" of the AFL-CIO has been controversial, although its critics have mainly been located outside the U.S. labour movement. In the 1960s, however, the Federation's support for the Vietnam war did eventually generate a degree of anti-war activity from rank and file trade unionists and a layer of union officials. In 1967, the powerful United Auto Workers (UAW) left the AFL-CIO following disagreements between UAW President Walter Reuther and AFL-CIO President George Meany over the latter's support for the escalation of the conflict in Indochina by the U.S. Aside from the belated and limited resistance to Vietnam, there has been no sustained challenge to Cold War unionism since the onset of the Cold War itself.

Set against this historical background, the conflict within U.S. labour over Central America during the 1980s constitutes something of a break with the past. In the

account below I demonstrate how and why this struggle developed and why it has broader implications for the future of both the U.S. and the international labour movement.

Broader Issues and Implications: The Crisis of U.S. Labour and the Future of Trade Union Internationalism.

The considerable impact the AFL-CIO has had on Nicaragua and El Salvador is, I would argue, itself sufficient reason to warrant a serious investigation and analysis of the foreign policy conflict in U.S. labour. There are, however, broader issues raised by this conflict which also require attention; indeed the conflict itself can not be fully understood unless one has some grasp of the wider context. These broader issues generally fall within the scope of two distinct but nevertheless connected academic and political discussions. The first discussion revolves around the crisis of the U.S. labour movement; the second concerns the future direction of international trade unionism. In my view, this thesis makes a significant contribution to both of these areas of concern.

1. The Crisis of U.S. Labour.

Few if any observers of U.S. labour can fail to note and reflect upon the profound character of the crisis of U.S. trade unionism. In common with labour movements in other advanced capitalist countries, U.S. labour has suffered a

series of setbacks in recent years. In most cases these setbacks have been due to changes in the political and economic balance of forces set in motion by the end of the postwar economic expansion. Traditional centres of trade unionism have atrophied in conjunction with the industrial restructuring of the recession and post-recession period.

It is widely accepted that the U.S. labour movement was perhaps less prepared than any other to deal with the changed political and economic climate of the 1980s. With no mass labour or social democratic party to offset the various incursions of capital, and politically isolated from other social movements and forces that might have combined with it to resist the broad offensive of the right, the defeats suffered by U.S. labour in the 1980s were deeper and more significant than was perhaps the case in any other advanced capitalist country. [1] (See Chapter Four) Most observers agree that the more aggressive posture of capital in the 1970s was later reflected in a rightward shift in both the Democratic and Republican parties in the 1980s, the unravelling of the postwar Keynesian consensus between labour, capital, and the state, and a serious reduction in the political power of U.S. trade unions. [2]

A widely discussed feature of the economic restructuring of this period has been the increasing levels of transnational investments and the constraints this has imposed on modern collective bargaining in particular. [3] Whether to defend their market shares from overseas competition, or to take full

advantage of business opportunities made available by the expansion of world trade in the 1980s, a section of U.S. capital reduced its domestic manufacturing operations and relocated in countries where labour was cheap and disorganised. Some large U.S. companies became involved in "joint ventures" with corporations from other countries. [4] More generally, the U.S. economy became increasingly exposed to competitive pressures from the world market. As the 1980s progressed, left observers of the U.S. and world economy were fairly clear that these changes had exposed workers in the advanced economies, as Gordon expressed it, "to increasingly relentless pressure on their wages, benefits, and working conditions." [5] Equally if not more serious, the Keynesian economic and social policies normally favoured by the U.S. and other labour movements were now widely considered to be increasingly unworkable as nation states saw their options and power reduced by increased international competition. [6]

For these and other reasons, changes in the world economy became identified as an important component of the crisis facing U.S. labour - even though considerable disagreement still exists regarding the extent, character and consequences of these changes. [7] The era of the "global assembly line" was, nevertheless, thought to have arrived.

U.S. labour movement commentators have only recently begun to address these issues, and have, so far, merely echoed the conclusion that the implications for organised labour are indeed serious and far reaching. A wide array of specific and

general policy suggestions have been put forth or endorsed by these commentators which have been directed at the AFL-CIO, individual unions and the Democratic Party. [8] Little has been said to date, however, on the issue of an appropriate international policy for U.S. labour. Moreover, only minimal attention has been paid to the role the AFL-CIO is presently performing in its international work.

This particularly applies to writers in the liberal "labor relations" tradition who have mainly focussed on the form and content of labour-management relations, especially the complex legal framework within which these relations operate in the U.S. This tradition has largely ignored the international economic and political dimension. For example, a relatively recent and widely discussed book in this genre, Freeman and Medoff's What do Unions Do?, made only one in-passing reference to "foreign competition" and made no mention at all of the AFL-CIO's extensive and well-funded international operations. [9] True, the growing literature on global economic change, compounded by the disintegration of the postwar consensus, has, in one or two instances, prompted a certain belated recognition that changes in the global economy might indeed deliver a serious jolt to the practice of U.S. industrial relations. So far this realisation has produced little more than general statements of concern. As one writer expressed it, "unions everywhere can learn from eachother...protecting the rights and interests of workers is a universal goal which transcends geographic

boundaries and ideological differences." [10] The value of such statements are, I would argue, limited to say the least.

Not surprisingly, the conclusions reached by left observers of the U.S. and the world economy have resonated more clearly in radical discussions on U.S. labour. Moreover, this tradition is generally more cognizant of the postwar international role of the AFL-CIO, which it regards as a logical extension of the conservative domestic politics of the U.S. labour movement. One might have expected, then, that left observers would have given urgent and concerted attention to a serious investigation of U.S. trade union international policy, attention which carried with it the objective of formulating proposals that reflected new economic and political realities.

This has not occurred. With the partial exception of Cantor and Schor's contribution (discussed below), efforts that have leaned in this direction have almost invariably been "tacked-on" to discussions which attempt to deal with U.S. labour in an all-encompassing and comprehensive manner. This has led to an underattention both to existing international activities and possible alternatives to them. Greenfield, for example, notes how "radicals...have cringed at the conservative nature of AFL-CIO foreign policy, often critical of Ronald Reagan from the right. Union internationalism often is displayed only in support of right-wing `patriots'." [11] However, even this statement seriously understates the extent and significance of the AFL-CIO's international involvement.

The AFL-CIO, as is conveyed below, has been much more than a mere cheerleader for the right in international affairs; rather, the Federation has been an important auxiliary to the U.S. Government in the Cold War struggle throughout the postwar period, registering a measurable impact on the development of labour movements in a host of countries.

Other left commentators are, however, more aware of this. Since 1945, notes Aronowitz, "U.S. labor representatives have worked to strengthen anti-communist unions in Europe and Third World countries..(.)" [12] Aronowitz and other left commentators have exhorted U.S. trade unions to seek links with unions in other countries as a means of responding to the greater integration of the world economy and the actual or perceived growing power of the multinationals. U.S. labour must recognise, says Aronowitz, that "it has been forced by historical conditions into opposition to the multinational corporations..(.)" [13] Regarding an appropriate international policy to reflect and advance this opposition, however, Aronowitz is vague. "American labor foreign policy," he suggests, should "encourage the formation of democratic labor movements in every country, including the absolute right of workers to strike and to control their own organizations." [14] Using similarly vague or general language, Greenfield concludes that "broad international coordination (and) multinational and multiracial solidarity must of practical necessity be an even more central feature of current trade union practice than was true of certain of the struggles that

built the CIO." [15]

It appears, then, that left as well as liberal commentators often have a seriously underdeveloped understanding of the significance of U.S. labour's existing international policy and can offer only the most vague prescriptions for developing a trade union internationalism that responds more effectively to the economic changes referred to above. It is not accidental, I believe, that perhaps the leading left authority on AFL-CIO foreign policy in Latin America, Hobart A. Spalding, is not a recognised U.S. labour movement scholar, but a historian primarily concerned with the development of Latin American workers organisations. [16]

It is possible that U.S. labour movement commentators have not embarked on a thorough investigation of AFL-CIO foreign policy because they do not anticipate that the results of such an investigation will have a significant bearing on their evaluation of the crisis in which U.S. labour presently finds itself. The Cold War stance of U.S. labour is seen to be symptomatic of a more general conservatism rooted in past and present social, political and economic relationships in the U.S.; therefore, it is implied, the primary source (or sources) of this conservatism should be the principle focus of analysis. [17]

The problem with this approach is that its deterministic bias is such that it is unable to accommodate the possibility that U.S. labour's foreign policy might have

some independent bearing on the crisis of U.S. labour. Yes, the AFL-CIO's international activities may have largely been the product of "domestic" factors, but the consequences of these activities, I would argue, are such that they have made their own independent contribution to the development of U.S. labour and its present crisis - a contribution that has been largely overlooked.

Moody gives implicit recognition to this when he posits that the AFL-CIO's international policy has "become a debilitating feature of its ability to respond to the realities of an altered world economy." [18] Exactly how debilitating, and in precisely what way, is, unfortunately, not developed. Cantor and Schor take a similar view, although their account pays more attention to the inadequacies of Cold War unionism and less to the task of formulating an alternative. They do, however, suggest a number of principles upon which new policies might be based. The AFL-CIO, they argue, should discontinue its Cold War "shunning" of left unions and begin to recognise that "anti-corporate or even pro-socialist sentiments among Third World workers are legitimate." [19] They also suggest that U.S. labour should be more critical of free-market development formulas, abandon protectionism, and "unmask the competitiveness mania currently sweeping Congress..(.)" [20] These suggestions broke the silence around this question, but they amount to what is, I would argue, a contradictory and confusing manifesto of principles that pays little attention to how these principles

might be put into practice.

The Contribution of this Thesis to the Debate on U.S. Labour.

The starting point of this thesis is located where other writers normally leave off. It recognises that existing accounts of U.S. labour, because they focus on what are widely viewed as the most central and pivotal trade union issues and practices, invariably leave too little space to deal adequately with the issue of trade union foreign policy and the interrelationships between different labour movements. This virtually universal neglect has left discussions on U.S. labour with significant defects or blind spots. These deficiencies fall into two categories. Firstly, the failure to seriously study the impact of Cold War unionism on overseas labour movements encourages the view that these activities have no independent bearing on the present crisis of U.S. labour. Secondly, this neglect has removed these commentators from any intellectual or political effort to formulate and facilitate an alternative international policy for U.S. labour.

In terms of the first claim, I would argue that Cold War unionism has more than simply debilitated the AFL-CIO's potential to respond to the challenges of the 1980s. More accurately - and more importantly - the AFL-CIO has actively advanced the Reagan Administration's foreign policy in Central America (and elsewhere) and defended this policy before the

wider union membership. By actively supporting the economic and political objectives of the Reagan Administration in Central America and elsewhere, one section of the AFL-CIO strengthened the position of a right-wing President while other sections were pulling in the opposite direction. Consequently, while U.S. labour was opposing (albeit weakly) the Reagan Administration's neo-liberal economic agenda on the domestic front, it was, in the name of the Cold War, actively supporting the political as well as economic dimensions of that same neo-liberal policy in the international arena. The consequences of this have been harmful to the interests of union members at home and therefore made a distinct contribution to the overall crisis of the labour movement.

The neglect of this question also leads to an inordinate stress on the problems of U.S. labour, with the implicit corollary that these are "home grown" and can only be resolved by U.S. labour itself. As I argue in Chapter One, the fortunes of the U.S. labour and the Left in particular has often been shaped by the twists and turns of international events, and international issues have frequently been a source of ideological conflict and reformulation in U.S. labour. Davis has perhaps recently gone furthest in expressing, in general terms, the potential impact international changes can have on U.S. working class politics. [21] He speculates that political turbulence in Latin America during the 1990s could do much to change the political profile and behaviour of sections of the U.S. working class. He anticipates an

"inevitable day of reckoning for the imperial hegemony of the U.S. economy" ushered in by a combination of political and economic determinants associated with the collapse of the postwar system of Fordist accumulation in the U.S. and the poor prospects for liberal capitalist development in Latin America and elsewhere. [22] If a "popular left" is to be rebuilt in the U.S. an important feature, suggests Davis, it will involve "increasing solidarity between the liberation movements in Southern Africa and Latin America and movements of the Black and Hispanic communities in the USA." [23] This thesis offers evidence which goes some way toward validating Davis's view. But it also identifies more specifically how the processes leading towards this end have been set in motion, the actors involved, and how and in what way such cross-national political relationships might alter the profile of U.S. working class politics.

If Left political movements in regions such as Latin America can indeed strengthen the U.S. Left (and, therefore, sections of the labour movement), then the extent to which U.S. labour assists or (as is presently the case) obstructs these movements must also be viewed as a factor that shapes working class politics in the U.S. It is in this manner, again, that the AFL-CIO's international policy can have an independent or relatively independent bearing on the present and future condition of U.S. labour.

Related to this is the indeterminate issue of morale. As is demonstrated in the chapters that follow, the Sandinista

revolution and the struggle of the Salvadoran Left were a source of inspiration for a section of U.S. Left otherwise demoralised by the dawn of the Reagan period. It is therefore pertinent to consider what might have been the effects of concerted and officially endorsed AFL-CIO activity in support of the Nicaraguan revolution and the Salvadoran Left in the 1980s, particularly in terms of its impact on the degree and intensity of U.S. Left activism. The same question can be asked concerning the Popular Unity government in Chile during 1970-73, which the AFL-CIO also actively opposed. Clearly, it is unwise to venture too far with such speculations, or to imply that the AFL-CIO's actions have been in any way decisive in determining the fate of these struggles. However, to ignore the actual or potential impact of U.S. labour's international activities, both in terms of the disempowerment of the U.S. Left or in terms of the actual impact of the AFL-CIO's interventions have had on the profile of labour movements and national politics in other countries, must appreciably distort any evaluation of the crisis of U.S. labour. In short, the international actions of the AFL-CIO impact upon the crisis of U.S. labour in two ways: firstly, in terms of what they have done and continue to do, and, secondly, in terms of what they might have done if a different international policy was in place.

Regarding the former, AFL-CIO foreign policy has played a significant role in shaping the postwar world according to the broad designs of the U.S. Department of State and U.S.

foreign policy more generally. It has opposed not just the Stalinist left throughout the world, but all shades of Leftism which are perceived to threaten the geopolitical or economic hegemony of the U.S. and its allies. During the postwar period, when the U.S. economy served as the leading locomotive of world capitalist growth, this policy either had little impact on the conditions of U.S. workers or (as the AFL-CIO itself once posited) actually contributed to the high living standards of unionised labour in the U.S. to some extent. [24] The 1974-75 recession saw Keynesian recipes fall from favour and marked an important juncture in the ideological ascendancy of radical neo-liberalism. By 1980, this had altered not just the U.S. Government's domestic economic policy, but it has also altered the U.S. Government's approach to the international economy. In the Americas, programs such as, for examples, the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and the maquiladoras export processing project in Mexico were designed to encourage U.S. manufacturers to leave the U.S. and to play their part in assisting the economic growth of Latin America and the Caribbean according to "free market" - and thus "free trade" - formulas for capitalist development. These programs have impacted negatively on U.S. workers, as AFL-CIO economists and lobbyists have been swift to indicate. [25] However, the international affairs apparatus of the AFL-CIO has assisted this extension of Reaganite neo-liberalism because it perceived the Cold War thrust of U.S. foreign policy to be basically on target and necessary. [26] While

it is true that the AFL-CIO has registered some formal criticisms of these programmes, it has actively opposed or refused to support labour movement and other political forces in these areas who show militant resistance to this model of development. Put more directly, the international affairs apparatus of the AFL-CIO viewed fighting the Cold War to be a higher priority than defending the interests of union members in the U.S. This is clearly demonstrated throughout the course of this work.

Identifying these various defects or blind spots in the existing literature on U.S. labour opens the way for an analysis which is more attuned to the impact political and economic change at an international level has had and will continue to have on U.S. working class politics, and how cross-national links between unions can reinforce or hinder political movements.

This conceptual or theoretical contribution does not, however, address the specific issue of a new and more effective internationalism for U.S. labour. And neither is that issue addressed adequately here. However the empirical character of this thesis permits a close-range examination of the impact of Cold War unionism on three labour movements, and how a nascent alternative internationalism has emerged. This thesis demonstrates how the struggle over Central America triggered discussions and controversy in the U.S. labour movement that went far beyond the particular features of the conflict in the region. It shows how the issue of Central

America and foreign policy in general served as a lightening rod for discussions and activism pertaining to the international economy, cross-national union solidarity, ideological disputes, human and trade union rights, and other issues. The conflict generated more grass-roots trade union activism, more coalition building between labour and other social movements, and more discussion on economic changes than perhaps any other single issue. Solidarity, coalition building, and internationalism - the clarion calls of the weak U.S. Left - actually began to take on the flesh of reality as a result of this struggle. [27] In other words, the struggle over international policy served as something of a catalyst for what might be the development of an alternative program for U.S. labour Left in later years.

By documenting the foreign policy struggle in U.S. labour, this thesis goes considerably further than most Left writers who appear content to exhort the U.S. labour movement to be internationalist and then leave it at that. It shows that a layer of union activists, officials and leaders have already taken preliminary steps toward a new internationalism for U.S. labour, and how these steps have been resisted at every turn by the international affairs apparatus of the AFL-CIO and their sympathisers. In the course of the struggle, the potential for a more thoroughgoing shift in the direction of U.S. labour becomes more clearly visible, as do the serious pitfalls and problems that will need to be negotiated. Indeed, I would argue that the lack of a full

discussion of this question among radical observers of U.S.labour simultaneously reflects and reinforces the general absence of a clear program or set of guiding theoretical principles upon which an alternative U.S. labour internationalism might be constructed. The political consequences of this absence is spelled out more clearly during the course of this work.

Clearly, the formulation of a new internationalism for U.S. labour requires more than the general statements and exhortations available in the existing Left literature. This thesis shows the impact of the existing policies and reveals the potential for change. Thus I see its role as a bridge between a state of silence on the question and the beginning of a period when this subject will receive more thorough attention - attention that will lead to informed and realisable policy suggestions.

2. The Future Direction of International Trade Unionism.

The second debate or discussion to which this thesis is directed is that which has unfolded in recent years around the issue of trade union internationalism. As I argued above, left labour movement commentators in the U.S. have not seriously investigated this question, and have, in my view, relied too heavily on prescriptive or general statements. Beyond the U.S., however, this question has received considerably more attention and this will be discussed below.

This next section also serves two additional purposes. Firstly, the 1980s foreign policy conflict in U.S. labour can not be fully understood without some knowledge of the Cold War rivalries and other ideological divisions in the international labour movement. Indeed, Central America became a key theatre for these rivalries to be played out in a way that had a significant political bearing on the overall crisis in the region. This section also shows the distinct importance of the AFL-CIO in international trade union politics, although this is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter One. Secondly, because of the AFL-CIO's importance, any shift in the international policy positions of U.S. labour will have significant implications. In the advanced capitalist countries, labour movement foreign policy is for the most part articulated by the political parties with whom the national federations are affiliated. The absence of a mass working class party in the U.S. has meant that this task falls squarely on the shoulders of the AFL-CIO leadership. In turn, the AFL-CIO leadership has for the most part left the formulation and implementation of foreign policy to the AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs (DIA), which receives approximately 95% of its funds from the U.S. Government and is staffed by unelected functionaries. These facts alone have forced a growing number of activists to conclude that U.S. labour movement foreign policy is either influenced, dominated or, perhaps, even controlled by the U.S. Government. Because of its Government-provided resources and

its established working relationship with U.S. Embassies and other international agencies, AFL-CIO foreign policy has had an extensive reach, so much so that the Federation has made a distinct imprint on working class politics in all five continents throughout the postwar period. As Zbigniew Brzezinski commented in 1974, U.S. labour had been "very much in the forefront of shoring up an alliance against Soviet expansionism." [28] Any serious challenge to this labour-government alliance is, to repeat, likely to have a significant impact on the political profile of the international labour movement.

International Labour and "Cold War Unionism".

The actual or perceived changes in the world economy, and particularly the belief that the multinationals have become more politically and economically powerful, has generated new interest (mainly outside the U.S.) in the role of the existing structures of international trade unionism. Organisations which formally connect national union federations, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), hitherto largely ignored, have come under increasing scrutiny. This scrutiny has produced conclusions which reflect negatively on the international trade union bodies who, it is alleged, have not responded to the new challenges posed by international capitalism.

One explanation for this lack of an effective response maintains that international union structures for the most part assumed their present methods and objectives during the height of the Cold War. Union federations with Communist leaderships, such as the CGT in France and the CGIL in Italy, aligned themselves with the pro-Soviet World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) which criticised the U.S. The British TUC joined with other social democratic and politically moderate trade union federations to form the ICFTU in 1949. This body generally supported the Marshall Plan and what was to become the NATO alliance, and criticised the Soviet Union In other words, during this period the principal international union structures generally reflected the rivalry of the superpowers. [29]

The phenomenon sometimes referred to as "Cold War unionism" continues to pervade international trade union politics. It refers to the divisions at global, continental, and national level within the labour movement which reflect the East-West split. The ICFTU majority has traditionally regarded the WFTU not as an authentic trade union formation, but as a front for Soviet foreign policy. It is alleged that Eastern bloc trade unions are politically subservient to the ruling communist parties of their respective countries and are not bona fide workers' organisations with an independent voice. Fraternal relationships with such organisations, who constitute the bulk of the WFTU's membership would, it is argued, be tantamount to embracing a political system which

(recent developments in the East bloc countries aside) repressed independent trade union organisations such as Solidarnosc in Poland. [30] For its part the WFTU has historically regarded the ICFTU as an obstacle to international trade union unity and a conscious or de facto servant of imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism. The WFTU's stated mission is to restore that unity and to develop relations with any ICFTU affiliate of similar sentiment. [31] When these divisions are reflected at national level they have the effect of dividing labour movements in any given country along Cold War lines. Critics of the WFTU and the ICFTU point out that divisions are disabling under any circumstances. However, in areas of the world where trade unionists struggle to survive indiscriminate repression such divisions are considered to be even more illogical and debilitating.

Cold War divisions, I would argue, do not wholly explain the present weakness of trade union internationalism. The cessation of these hostilities would not in and of itself necessarily facilitate an effective response to the challenges of the current era, East, West, or in the Third World. Indeed, the international labour and trade union movement has been profoundly split since the end of World War One and even in its heyday the Second International was itself hardly a model of ideological unity. Divisions within international labour did not begin with the Cold War and are not likely to end with its passing. It is necessary, therefore, to view

Cold War unionism through a wider historical lens. It is widely acknowledged that the 1947-1974 expansion facilitated a relatively protracted period of mutual accommodation on the part of labour, capital and the state in the advanced capitalist countries. This is not to say that, for examples, the events in France 1968, Italy in 1969-70 and Britain 1971-74 did not rupture the general pattern of stability; however, the most enduring arrangements of this period were by and large peaceful. In the East the consolidation of Stalinist regimes began a period of state-directed economic and social development (again, not without periods of turmoil, such as Germany 1953, Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, and Poland intermittently). Eastern bloc trade unions conformed to party-determined priorities which, stripped to basics, maintained that the construction of socialism required non-adversarial relations between the ruling Communist party and the broader working class. "Free collective bargaining" was perceived inappropriate now that capitalism had been overthrown, and independent workers' organisations were considered to be anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary. [32]

During this period trade unions in the West displayed a general commitment to gradual advances within a liberal capitalist framework while in the East trade unions were to a large extent constructed by the respective regimes and operated within the space accorded to them. The policies, activities and objectives of international trade unionism were

therefore by and large molded by the fact that, in the case of the ICFTU affiliates, trade unions had a vested interest in continued capitalist expansion and the maintenance of conflict-free relations with their respective governments. Meanwhile, for the WFTU affiliates situated in Communist countries, their presence on the international scene necessitated they adhere to party-determined foreign policy positions.

The trade union internationalism of the ICFTU and the WFTU amounted to an effort to perpetuate and extend the dominant social and political arrangements of the period. Therefore Cold War unionism, while itself a peculiar phenomenon, nevertheless reflected the social, political and economic arrangements which prevailed during the postwar expansion in the West and the industrial development (and repair) under Stalinist leadership in the East. The significance of this broader interpretation of Cold War unionism will be discussed below.

International Trade Union Structures and the Third World

A perusal of the trade union situation in a random number of Third World countries is very likely to detect the presence of international trade union structures. Indeed, these structures have had a noticeable and, as will be

conveyed below, often profound effect on labour movements in the former colonial world.

In the early postwar period trade unions outside of Europe and North America were under considerable pressure to support one side or the other in the East-West schism. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, the vast majority of trade unions followed the example of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the British TUC, and other union federations and distanced themselves from the Soviet Union and the WFTU. [33] Genuine ideological considerations aside, support for the West in the Cold War could be offered in return for financial assistance from the U.S. Government (via sections of the U.S. trade union movement). Furthermore, a friendly relationship with the labour attache in the U.S. Embassy frequently provided some protection from right-wing domestic repression. Open anti-Americanism not only severed this external line of support but exposed trade unions to charges of being sympathetic to communism, accusations which were all too frequently followed by repression of a most brutal character. Where trade unions enjoyed government patronage, such as Mexico and Argentina, the impact of international trade union bodies has been considerably less significant. [34]

It was suggested above that Cold War unionism reflected the consolidation of postwar political and economic relations in the East and in the advanced capitalist West. However, in the Third World, anti-colonial and class struggle in numerous

countries meant that the relative stability of the core countries did not always extend to the periphery. Of course, many countries achieved independence from the colonial powers with relatively little conflict, and trade union federations in several cases entered into their own brand of consensus arrangements with capital and the state, arrangements that were usually cemented by shared objectives pertaining to national economic development. [35] For ICFTU affiliates in Europe and North America, trade union internationalism vis-a`-vis the Third World often amounted to helping this process along. The British TUC, for example, desired to help the Labour government of 1945-51 administer a peaceful de-colonisation of Asian and African territories. The TUC believed that "if there can be developed an effective trade union movement, the principles of democracy can be practiced and learnt in order to serve the purposes of self government." [36] One writer referred to an "alliance between metropolitan labour and colonial administration," in the pursuit of "enlightened paternalistic ends." [37]

The WFTU's role in the Third World since 1949 has been to advance the Moscow-encouraged view that labour movements in the so-called developing capitalist countries should lend support to the purportedly anti-imperialist and democratic project of the "progressive" indigenous bourgeoisie. The general and specific consequences of this policy, and its precise historical and political origins, can not be discussed here. However, it reflected an acceptance of the capitalist

development model encouraged by the core capitalist governments. Once the national democratic revolution and industrialisation had been consolidated, then, and only then, was it possible to consider moving towards socialism. In essence, the Third World must first pass through a "stage" of capitalist development before reaching the conditions ripe for socialism. [38] This meant that both the ICFTU and the WFTU advocated reforms within a capitalist developmentalist framework.

The Role of the AFL-CIO.

The AFL and later the AFL-CIO (the two federations merged in 1955) adopted a relatively militant anti-colonial position within the ICFTU which brought them into conflict with the TUC, with the Americans accusing their British counterparts of being accomplices in colonial domination. [39] The centre of this conflict was Africa during the 1950s and early 60s. While the AFL-CIO also envisaged and unequivocally supported capitalist development objectives, its guiding principle was the pursuit of the Cold War. Several writers have suggested that the AFL-CIO's anti-colonial posture was a conscious step to win the confidence of Third World labour leaders in order to promote its own Cold War objectives. [40] The AFL-CIO considered the TUC in particular to be too half-hearted in its opposition to the Soviet Union and the WFTU, and saw itself as the only true guardians of free and democratic trade

unionism in the international labour movement. [41] Moreover, as one observer of African trade union affairs recorded in 1966, "It was difficult to avoid the conclusion that the AFL-CIO, the American Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency were working together closely in a common (Cold War) offensive. Any such suspicions were more than justified by the evidence." [42]

In Latin America and the Caribbean the AFL-CIO exerted considerable influence over the labour movement of the subcontinent, and supported U.S.-backed military coups and other destabilisation efforts launched against radical reformist regimes such as Allende's Chile and Jagan's Guyana. Cold War unionism became a highly visible feature of trade union politics in many parts of the region in the postwar period. (See Chapter One)

The AFL and later the AFL-CIO (the two Federations merged in 1955) exerted great influence over the early ICFTU by virtue of its superior resources, an aggressive international profile shaped by virulent anti-Communism, and a close (ideological as well as institutional) relationship to the U.S. Government. However, the Vietnam War, Chile, and other episodes intensified criticism of the global role of the U.S. within the international labour movement and weakened the Cold War thrust of the ICFTU. In the late 1970s, leaders of the Socialist International (S.I.) shifted considerable attention to the Third World. The Brandt report of 1980 recommended radical changes in the global balance of economic

power in the direction of the poorer countries based on a fairer management and distribution of global resources - a New International Economic Order (NIEO). [45] Throughout the 1980s the AFL-CIO maintained its Cold War stance, and faced mounting criticism from within the ICFTU for its active support for U.S. foreign policy. [44]

Despite the change in S.I. Third World policy, the economic and political realities of vast sections of the Third World have not been conducive to social democracy as conceptualised and practiced in Europe. Therefore the SI's and the ICFTU's gradual retreat from the trenches of the Cold War and their call for changes in the management of the global economy have not been able to overcome the limitations of the capitalist Third World development model it once accepted or advocated. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, the effects of the economic downturn of 1980-81 and the extremely weak recovery thereafter has severely constrained the reform agendas of social democratic governments in several instances (e.g. Jamaica, Peru, and Venezuela). [45]

In sum, the ideological splits in international labour consolidated during the Cold War have been pivotal in shaping the practice of postwar trade union internationalism, and that the AFL-CIO has been a major player throughout this period. In the Chapters that follow, all the main actors referred to above - the AFL-CIO, ICFTU, SI and WFTU - play their part in the theatre of the Central America conflict.

The "New Internationalism."

In the 1960s some observers posited that the growth of the multinationals had created both the objective conditions and the need for unions to overcome national boundaries and forge firm international links that might open up an era of cross-national collective bargaining. [46] Writers later associated with the New International Labour Studies (NILS) challenged the simplicity of this notion, pointing out that it ignored the unevenness of wages and conditions, political peculiarities, ideological differences, and so on. [47] Indeed, by the end of the 1980s efforts to build cross-national links between workers employed by any given multinational had produced only modest results and were confined to a few industries and unions. [48]

Thomson and Larson argued that the international labour structures (particularly the AFL-CIO), far from being simply unable to promote an effective trade union internationalism, had actually fomented deeper divisions in international labour. In the Third World in particular, the TUC, AFL-CIO and others were accused of "trade union imperialism" because of their loyalty to the policies of their own governments who had, they argued, exploited the Third World and its workers. [49] The Cold War unionism of TUC and the AFL-CIO embodied a clear imperialist objective. A new internationalism, they argued, was necessary and possible once these calcified structures had been revamped and democratised by rank and file

intervention.

The NILS writers have since advanced the discussion of trade union and working class internationalism beyond the "trade union imperialism" approach, and have theorised and developed new concepts and strategies which might advance the objective of a new internationalism. Waterman in particular has encouraged a more catholic or inclusionary vision of internationalism, pointing to the need for unions to connect with and support "a growth of internationalism within the peace, environmental, human rights, women's and other movements." [50]

The Contribution of this Thesis to Discussions on International Labour and the "New Internationalism."

This thesis makes two distinct contributions to the debate outlined above. Firstly, it demonstrates how "political restructuring" can have equal and perhaps more impact on the development of a new internationalism than global economic changes. Secondly, as suggested above, the empirical character of this thesis permits a close-range exploration of the process of constructing a new trade union internationalism in a contemporary context. Given the extreme rarity of empirical works that have focussed on the interrelationships between different national labour movements, this study will hopefully advance understanding of this neglected area.

Regarding the question of "political restructuring", it is somewhat surprising that the discussion on trade union internationalism that has unfolded apace in recent years has accorded little attention to the political ruptures which accompanied both global economic change and the end of the 1947-74 expansion. Howarth and Ramsay have argued that the period of economic "contraction" has exposed the "union parochialism" characteristic of the postwar Keynesian accommodation, which explains, they feel, why unions were ill-equipped to deal with the mobility of the multinationals. [51] Waterman has warned against "exclusive concentration on multinationals and internationalisation," and has advanced the view that more attention be paid to "the re-structuring of capital more generally." [52]

These comments aside, by far the most compelling image evoked by the NILS writers is that of capital becoming more international, more conscious of its power over workers, and more determined to press home its advantage. Their starting point or basic premise is that, as Cohen argues, "the conditions under which a genuine international labour movement can arise depend both on the changes wrought by capital itself in its drive to globalization, and on the capacity for the workers to respond effectively to such changes." [53] The search for a new internationalism, therefore, is for the most part located around the restructuring of capital as it pertains to the activity of the multinationals and the increasing internationalisation of the capitalist economy.

The End of the "Social Pact" in the U.S. and its Significance.

The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that global economic change and particularly the behaviour of the multinationals is only one factor in the process of building a new internationalism. In the case of the U.S., global economic change helped generate a changed world view among sections of organised labour which later developed into a nascent alternative to Cold War unionism. Important as this is, the political context in which the restructuring of capital took place was in this instance a more significant element in this process.

In the U.S., for example, business has pursued several strategies simultaneously, only one of which can be interpreted as a drift towards greater globalization. [54] The loss of U.S. trade union power has been as much a result of political attacks as it has been due to economic change (See Chapter Four) Importantly, the success of these attacks has largely rested on the open complicity of the U.S. Government in advancing the anti-union agenda of U.S. capital. During the 1980s the U.S. Government broke unions (e.g. the air traffic controllers), packed arbitration bodies such as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) with pro-business conservatives, and, just as important, allowed capital a much freer reign to do what was perceived to be required to restructure and reinvigorate the U.S. economy. [55]

Waterman is correct to assert that the re-structuring of capital more generally demands attention. However the "political restructuring" which facilitated economic restructuring - including government or government-inspired aggressiveness towards trade unions - is also extremely important, especially when assessing the prospects for a new internationalism. Unions in the advanced capitalist countries have been accustomed to directing their concerns towards the state and have secured certain reforms. As a consequence, unions invested considerable effort and interest in the economic performance of their own countries. Logue maintains that this type of labour-state accommodation reduced the apparent need for working class internationalism and this partly explains why such activity has been so peripheral and stunted. [56] It is therefore somewhat surprising that the prospects for a new internationalism triggered by the deterioration of postwar consensus arrangements have for the most part not been considered in depth.

This thesis demonstrates how the impulse towards a new internationalism can, in the case of core countries like the U.S., be generated by the collapse of consensus arrangements between labour, capital and the state. During this postwar expansion (indeed, since the New Deal), the state was seen to be an (albeit inconsistent) co-defender of workers' political and economic rights. Indeed, the political rift between labour and the state affects most if not all of organised labour and not just sections employed by multinationals or

"trade-impacted" industries. For workers this political rift is therefore more visible, more comprehensible, and more disconcerting than the increased globalization of capital.

In the U.S., the increased globalization of capital has certainly contributed to an alteration in working class perceptions about the multinationals and the workings of the world capitalist economy, and not just among the many thousands of U.S. workers who in the 1980s lost their jobs because their companies moved abroad to take advantage of abundant cheap labour. [57] However, because of the role of the state in recent decades, unions have directed their concerns regarding the multinationals and global economic change towards Congress and the President. In the U.S., AFL-CIO lobbyists have exhorted Congress to "save American jobs" by restricting imports. These efforts have largely failed. While it is generally true that protectionist tensions have increased and the level of restrictive practices has risen, the AFL-CIO has urged a far greater degree of trade protection than the levels so far accomplished. The AFL-CIO, pointing to a seemingly ever widening U.S. trade deficit, has complained incessantly that the Reagan-Bush Administrations have allowed foreign competition to ravage domestic industries to the detriment of the U.S. economy and the American worker. [58] Moreover, these Administrations approved (reluctantly) only minimal restrictions on factory closures (such as a required period of advance notice) and cut social programs that hitherto might have protected displaced workers from the

worst consequences of unemployment and social dislocation. [59] Therefore, many trade unionists now regard the government as an accomplice of the multinationals in their exploitation of the global labour market. [60]

The U.S. Government's adversarial posture towards the unions has weakened the labour-government partnership in the international arena. AFL-CIO support for the Cold War, the penetration of the multinationals into Third World economies, and encouraging collaboration between labour and capital in every continent, became increasingly viewed as out of step with the new adversarial relations in the domestic sphere. As this thesis demonstrates, the process of labour disengaging itself from the state in the area of foreign policy is not straightforward. The institutional and ideological roots of labour's active collaboration in U.S. Government foreign policy formation and implementation dates back to World War One. The Central America conflict did become a serious issue inside the labour movement, but (as of 1989) it did not become significant enough to decisively resolve the foreign policy conflict in one way or another. However, the conflict did advance the decomposition of Cold War unionism and generate a distinct impulse towards an alternative internationalism.

This thesis demonstrates how political as well as economic change can seriously advance the search for a trade union internationalism appropriate to the post-pact conditions. It also explores, at close-range, the processes that have been triggered and the main actors involved.

Summary

The empirical and theoretical objectives of this thesis can now be summarized. There are three main empirical tasks: Firstly, to elucidate the internal and external challenges to the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism and how a nascent alternative internationalism began to take shape during the 1980s. Secondly, to show the impact of AFL-CIO international policy on Nicaragua and El Salvador and, thirdly, to demonstrate how the practice of Cold War unionism advanced the neo-liberal economic agenda of the U.S. Government and the multinationals and worked against the interests of unionised workers in the U.S.

The main theoretical objective with regard to the discussion on U.S. labour is to establish that U.S. labour's international activities can have an independent bearing on the crisis of U.S. trade unionism, and that future discussions on U.S. labour should weigh the implications of this. Related to this, it is shown how challenges to U.S. hegemony can measurably alter the political profile of U.S. working class politics - especially when capital and the state adopt an adversarial posture towards labour in the domestic sphere. In terms on the debate on trade union internationalism, this thesis shows how the "political restructuring" of the post-pact period can contribute to the construction (in theory and in practice) of a new trade union internationalism.

Methodology: U.S. Trade Unions and the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan Revolutions.

This thesis is essentially a piece of contemporary history which focuses on the political interrelationships of trade union organisations in three countries, the U.S., Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Pertaining to the methodology employed in this work, several points need to be made regarding the national labour movements or countries selected for investigation. It is perhaps more useful to begin by stating why other labour movements and countries were not selected. If the primary objective of this thesis was to explore U.S. trade union responses to the increases in international trade and the apparent growth in power of the multinationals, then countries like Canada and Mexico would have clearly been more appropriate choices. Indeed, while the activity of U.S. multinationals in El Salvador and Nicaragua has been considerable, such activity has been far greater in the case of a whole host of other countries. [61] However, in terms of Administration development objectives, El Salvador was expected to be transformed into the "Taiwan of the Americas" and was presented as a showcase for other less developed regions of the subcontinent. Such an outcome would have quite profound economic and political implications for organised labour in the U.S. This point aside, it is nonetheless the case that El Salvador and Nicaragua were

selected because they best demonstrated the impact of the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism or, as others prefer to call it, trade union imperialism, in a contemporary context. Moreover, the AFL-CIO, reflecting the priorities of the Reagan Administration, made Nicaragua and El Salvador its main foreign policy concern during the 1980s. [62] However, the AFL-CIO was also seriously involved in, to name only a few, South Africa, South Korea and the Philippines. [63]

Also from a methodological standpoint, El Salvador and Nicaragua provide two contrasting manifestations of the AFL-CIO's intervention. The international role of the AFL-CIO has historically been twofold. On the one hand, it has attempted to promote class harmony, a liberal model of capitalist development which accorded a leading role to U.S. multinationals, social and political reforms, and support for the U.S. in the Cold War. This role is clearly observable in the case of El Salvador during the last two decades. (See Chapters 2, 4, 5, 9 and 10.) On the other hand, the AFL-CIO has actively assisted U.S.-supported or sponsored destabilization efforts against left reformist regimes, particularly in Latin America. The AFL-CIO has helped build trade union opposition to governments of this nature (See Chapter 1), opposition which is widely believed to have on several occasions contributed to their eventual downfall. This thesis therefore presents an opportunity to compare and contrast the AFL-CIO's trade union intervention in two quite different political contexts. Whatever economic similarities

may exist between the two countries, El Salvador was ruled by a right-wing government backed by an extreme right-wing military, and Nicaragua was a revolutionary state that declared Marxism-Leninism as its guiding doctrine. (See Chapters 2 & 3)

Importantly, the left trade unions in El Salvador, and the pro-Sandinista labour organisations in Nicaragua, have also been engaged in a political conflict with the Cold War leadership of the AFL-CIO and the unions sponsored and sustained by the federation. They have accused the AFL-CIO of dividing the labour movement in those countries in order to advance the objectives of the U.S. Government and the CIA. The challenge to the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism is, therefore, not merely a question internal to the AFL-CIO, but has an external dimension also.

It must also be remembered that while the external challenge is advanced by revolutionary opportunities and change, these are in turn rooted in the failure of the capitalist industrialization model to raise or even maintain the living standards of the working class and peasantry. An integral aspect of the Cold War unionism of the AFL-CIO has been active identification with the capitalist industrialization development model, and it was the exhaustion of this model which provided the basic fuel to the external challenge. Taking the American continent as a whole, Central America is the region that reflects this exhaustion more than any other.

In focusing on Nicaragua and El Salvador, this thesis explores some of the particulars of this "external" challenge to the AFL-CIO's international presence, as well as the connection between the "external" and "internal" challenges. This connection was facilitated by that fact that a considerable number of U.S. union activists and lower officials, as well as several union leaders, viewed the Nicaraguan revolution and the Salvadoran left as worthy of either critical or uncritical support. To many these movements constituted something of a political breakthrough in the struggle against the power of the multinationals. In other words, the relatively insignificant economic importance of El Salvador and Nicaragua is put in sharp relief by their political significance. Finally, the left unions in El Salvador and the Sandinista unions in Nicaragua provided two clearly defined international partners for the dissidents in the U.S. labour movement. Internationalism, after all, implies a bi-lateral or multi-lateral relationship between consenting partners; unilateral declarations of solidarity, it seems reasonable to suggest, pale somewhat by comparison. The Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions opened up the potential space for a new inter-American trade union internationalism to develop which rested on quite different ideological premises than the already existing internationalism of the AFL-CIO and its Latin American affiliates.

These considerations are clearly pivotal to the debates on U.S. labour and international trade unionism discussed above. The Central America controversy reveals much about the present ideological landscape of contemporary U.S. trade unionism and how this landscape might change in future. The ideological differences that became visible in this conflict have every chance of being deepened and carried over to other issues that pertain to political alliances and industrial strategies. Therefore Nicaragua and El Salvador are particularly appropriate sites for investigation.

The Structure of this thesis.

This thesis is divided into eleven chapters.

Chapter 1 discusses the historical foundations of U.S. labour's international policies and activities and how the AFL-CIO helped consolidate Cold War unionism in the international labour movement.

Chapter 2 describes how the AFL-CIO, through the activities of AIFLD, played an important role in El Salvador before, during, and after the failed insurrection of 1980. Two AIFLD representatives were murdered during a genocidal repression unleashed by right-wing death squads and Government forces.

Chapter 3 describes how the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua derailed AIFLD-supported moderate trade unionism.

AIFLD and its affiliate unions in Nicaragua then stood in opposition to the Sandinistas and generally in line with the Reagan Administration's policy of support for the armed counterrevolution.

Chapter 4 demonstrates how the situation in Central America and growing opposition to U.S. foreign policy impacted on U.S. trade unions, and how the collapse of the postwar consensus fueled this opposition. The AFL-CIO's contribution to the Kissinger Commission in late 1983 is also discussed in some depth.

Chapter 5 examines the role of AIFLD in El Salvador in 1984 and how this concurred with U.S. Government objectives. It also examines the limited revival of the left trade unions during this period, the part played by dissident forces in U.S labour in their re-emergence.

Chapter 6 focuses on AIFLD's efforts to spread an unfavourable view of the Sandinistas throughout the U.S. labour movement and in Congressional circles. It also describes how AIFLD's view of the Sandinistas was challenged during this period by trade union visitors to Nicaragua.

Chapter 7 focuses on the growing degree of confrontation in U.S. labour regarding Nicaragua and El Salvador, culminating in a clash between Cold War and anti-intervention forces at the AFL-CIO national convention in late 1985.

Chapter 8 explains how AIFLD's reform proposals adopted (in part) by the Kissinger Commission were quietly ignored by the Reagan Administration. Despite this, AIFLD and the DIA

continue to actively campaign for contra aid. Meanwhile, in Nicaragua the economic plight of workers continues to worsen.

Chapter 9 documents the increasing level of U.S. trade union involvement with the left trade unions in El Salvador. AIFLD's unrelenting propaganda war against these unions is also described, including the formation of parallel unions.

Chapter 10 examines the developments which led to a major labour-religious demonstration against U.S. foreign policy in Washington D.C. in April 1987. The second section of this chapter examines the role of labour movement figures in the Iran-contra scandal.

Chapter 11 provides a condensed account of events in the U.S., Salvadoran and Nicaraguan labour movements during the period of 1988 to mid 1989. It then attempts to develop some general points and conclusions pertaining to the political struggle described in earlier chapters.

A Note on the Research.

The research for this thesis was mainly conducted in New York City with the helpful assistance of the political action department of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). The director of the department, David Dyson, was and remains the coordinator of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador (NLC). Access to the department allowed me to stay abreast of the day to day developments which took place inside

the U.S. trade unions around the issue of Central America and to develop and discuss with a network of trade union and other contacts across the U.S. I developed my knowledge of the period discussed in this thesis which precedes the field work and writing up stages (1981 to mid-1986) by studying hundreds of letters and memoranda filed in Dyson's office. These mainly consisted of correspondences between union leaders on both sides of this conflict. These are cited directly where appropriate.

During this period I also observed and collaborated with Daniel Cantor, an ACTWU staff member who joined Dyson as a coordinator of the NLC in early 1986 when the work load expanded. Cantor later became the trade union coordinator for the Presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson in 1988 following the publication of a book he co-authored with Harvard economist Juliet Schor entitled Tunnel Vision: Labor, The World Economy and Central America (Boston: PACCA Series, South End Press, 1987). Cantor's subject area clearly paralleled my own and this presented an opportunity to share ideas and discuss material in the preparation of his early drafts. Full credit for the book, I should add, belongs to him and his co-author.

Other trade union officials and activists across the U.S. provided letters, memoranda, newspaper articles, clips from local union journals, etc. which could not realistically be acquired in any other way. I conducted standard face-to-face and telephone interviews with many of these

individuals over a two-year period.

An important source of written primary material were AIFLD and the DIA itself. Transcripts of Congressional testimonies, replies to critics, bulletins, reports, newspaper articles, etc. were (and continue to be) circulated to trade union officials for propaganda purposes. By virtue of my presence at ACTWU, these documents invariably came into my possession. Moreover, AIFLD made available to me additional material and information such as conference reports, articles from foreign policy journals, etc. which were much less accessible. Trade union newspapers and magazines, particularly AFL-CIO News, Free Trade Union News, AIFLD Report and others produced by major U.S. unions were also widely utilised.

Primary material from Nicaragua and El Salvador, such as letters, press releases, policy statements, resolutions and declarations were acquired directly from the headquarters of union federations in Managua and San Salvador during an August 1986 tour of Nicaragua and El Salvador with the Washington Area Labor Committee. In Nicaragua, such material was provided by the Sandinista federations CST and ATC and the AIFLD-sponsored federation CUS. In El Salvador, I collected material from the headquarters of the AIFLD-sponsored federation UNOC and their more left-wing rival the UNTS and several of its affiliate unions. As a participant of the Washington Area Labor Committee's tour, I taped and later transcribed more than thirty hours of interviews with

Salvadoran and Nicaraguan trade unionists on both sides of the conflict. Representatives of the UNTS in Washington D.C. subsequently provided further material generated by the UNTS in San Salvador. New York representatives of the FDR, the political wing of the Salvadoran guerilla organisation FMLN, also provided transcripts of speeches, copies of resolutions, and other materials.

Other organisations and individuals in New York City made it possible to stay abreast of developments in Nicaragua and El Salvador. A valuable resource in this regard was the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) whose close connections to Central America and extraordinary library furnished this thesis with considerable material.

The field work and writing-up period of this thesis was preceded by nine months (September 1985 until June 1986) of reading at libraries in London, particularly the Trades Union Congress' library for current and historical material pertaining to U.S. trade unions and the international labour movement, and the London School of Economics and the Institute of Latin American Studies for material on the Central America conflict.

A Note to the Reader.

One of the most difficult aspects of this research was trying to stay abreast of events in three different countries and the related problem of geographical distances. Another

serious problem, however, was the sheer number of trade union organisations which came into the historical and contemporary picture. Not only are there scores of different organisations, in several instances organisations split in half and both claim the original name, or periodically change names but are, in reality, the same as before. There is probably no way of completely overcoming the problem this presents to the reader. However, I have taken reasonable measures to make reading this thesis a little easier.

Firstly, I have inserted an Table of Acronyms at the end of this Introduction which is divided into <u>five</u> sections: the U.S., Nicaragua, El Salvador, international, and miscellaneous. This table is also inserted as an appendix, only in this instance the acronyms (almost 200 in all) are presented in alphabetical order. Secondly, the reader should know that the name of Spanish-language organisations will, for convenience, appear first in English followed by its Spanish name and acronym which will both appear in parenthesis. For example:

> Council for Union Unification (Consejo de Unificacion Sindical -CUS)

Thereafter only the acronym will be used. To prevent excessive reference to the Table of Acronyms, I have attempted to remind the reader of key points of information regarding any given organisation. For example:

FESINCONSTRANS, the politically moderate construction workers' federation, declared its support for the new pro-Government union coalition, the CTD.

A further challenge to the reader is the irregular chronological pattern of the chapters. The scene skips back and forth from the U.S., Nicaragua and El Salvador, which can be confusing. However, because a principal theme of this thesis concerns the interrelationships between the U.S. labour movements and those of El Salvador and Nicaragua, it was not possible to deal with one country at a time in a self-contained fashion.

Finally, considerations pertaining to time, space and clarity dictate that some secondary organisations and actors have been excluded. Furthermore, because this study covers quite recent developments it should not be viewed as a complete historical account. However, I have attempted to bring this account up to date as new material became available.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. As Greenfield comments, "the capitalist offensive (against organised labour) has been much more effective in this country (the U.S.)..than in Western Europe and other economically developed capitalist societies." However, Greenfield takes a longer view both of the offensive of capital and the decline of U.S. union power, both of which began in the late 1960s. See Michael Greenfield, The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago Ill.: 1987) p. 232.

2. See, for example, Richard Edwards and Michael

Podgursky, "The Unravelling Accord: American Unions in Crisis," in Unions in Crisis and Beyond: Perspectives for Social Control. ed. Richard Edwards, Paollo Garonna, and Franz Togtling. (Dover, Ma.: Auburn House Publishing) pp. 14-20

3. Stanley Aronowitz, Working Class Hero, (New York, Adama Books: 1983) p. 180.

4. For a concise statement on these changes, see International Labor Rights Education and Research Fund, Trades' Hidden Costs: Worker Rights in a Changing World Economy.

5. David Gordon, "The Global Economy: New Edifice of Crumbling Foundations?" Dept. Economics, New School for Social Research, July 1987. p. 11. Published later in New Left Review, 168 (Mar.- April. 1988) See also F. Frobel, J. Heinrichs & Otto Kreye The New International Division of Labour (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

6. ibid. p. 14

7. Gordon, for example, maintains that the shift in production to the Third World is more a reflection of the crisis of the postwar system of capitalist accumulation than it is a fundamental restructuring of the world economy as suggested by the New International Division of Labour and Globalization of Production theorists. For an invaluable discussion on these contending viewpoints see Gordon, ibid. For a treatment of the impact of these changes on women workers in the Export Processing Zones, see A. Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich Women in the Global Factory (Boston: Institute for New Communications, South End Press, 1983).

8. See, for example, Aronowitz, op. cit. Ch. 7 pp. 171-207.

9. Richard B. Freeman and James L. Medoff, What do Unions Do? (New York, Basic Books: 1984) pp. 176-7.

10. Lee Bailet, Survey of Labor Relations, (Washington, D.C., Bureau of National Affairs: 1987) Second Edition. p. 190

11. Greenfield, op. cit. p. 58.

12. Aronowitz, op. cit. p. 41

13. ibid. p. 186

14. ibid. pp. 205-6

15. Greenfield, op. cit. p. 244.

16. Hobart A. Spalding, Organized Labor in Latin America, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) For a discussion on the AFL-CIO in Latin America, see, for example, "U.S. Labour Intervention in Latin America: the Case of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD)." Labor, Capital and Society, November 1984, pp. 137-172.

17. This view flows from the "American Exceptionalism" thesis, a central reference point for discussions on U.S. working class politics. Key aspects of thesis are accepted by a broad range of left as well as liberal writers. See Selig Perlman, A Theory of the Labor Movement, (New York: Macmillan, 1928). See also John Laslett and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. Failure of a Dream? Essays in the History of American Socialism, (New York, 1974). For a more recent discussion of exceptionalism from a Left perspective, see Mike Davis, Prisoners of the American Dream, (London: Verso, 1986) Chapter 1, pp. 3-51.

18. Kim Moody, An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism, (London: Verso, 1988) p. 271. Moody views the foreign policy struggle in U.S. labour as "a significant step towards a genuine labor internationalism among U.S. union activists," which is itself part of a more far-reaching transformation on the part of U.S. labour from business unionism to a "more militant social unionism." ibid. p. 301.

19. Daniel Cantor and Juliet Schor, Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy, and Central America, Policy Alternatives for Central America and the Caribbean [PACCA], (Boston: South End Press, 1987.) p. 79-80.

20. ibid.

21. Davis, op. cit.

22. ibid. p. 302.

23. ibid. p. 313.

24. See Jack Scott, Yankee Unions Go Home: How the U.S. Built an Empire in Latin America, (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978). Scott's account is replete with statements by U.S. labour leaders who attributed the high living standards of U.S. unionised workers to the international power of the U.S. Government and the U.S. economy.

25. Stephen Koplan, Legislative Rep. AFL-CIO. Statement to House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 27, 1982; AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement on the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, HR5900, Feb. 1982. On AFL-CIO with regard to the maquiladoras, see Rachel Kamel, The Global Factory: Analysis and Action for a New Economic Era, (Philadelphia, Pa.: American Friends Service Committee, 1990)

26. See Catherine Sunshine, The Caribbean: Survival, Struggle and Sovereignty, EPICA, (Boston: South End Press, 1988) Second Edition, p.111

27. Other struggles occurred in the 1980s which also generated real political movement around these principles. See Jeremy Brecher & Tim Costello (eds.) Building Bridges: The Emerging Grassroots Coalition of Labor and Community, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990)

28. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "From Utopia to Apocalypse," Art International: The Lugano Review, Nov. 1974, p. 71.

29. Charles Levinson, International Trade Unionism (London, Allen & Unwin: 1972).

30. This is a recurring theme in the ICFTU's periodical, Free Labour World.

31. This is a recurring theme in the WFTU's periodical World Trade Union Movement.

32. In early post war Czechoslovakia, for example, trade unions were required to address the "problem of worker morale and discipline." Moreover, a defender of the new union methods maintained that "Absenteeism and negligence are crimes against the State and against the working people who have become the leading force in the nation." See Gustav Beuer, New Czechoslovakia and her Historical Background (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1947) pp. 217-218.

33. For an evaluation of the historical role of CTAL from its principle leader, see Vincente Lombardo Toledano, La Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina ha concluido su mision historia (Mexico City: 1964).

34. See Spalding, Organized Labour...; Sunshine op. cit. pp. 106-111. See also Moises Poblete Troncoso & Ben G. Burnett Rise of the Latin American Labor Movement (N.Haven, CT.:1960).

35. Paul Tiyambe Zeksa "Trade Union Imperialism: American Labour, the ICFTU and the Kenyan Labour Movement," Social and Economic Studies 36 2, 1987 pp. 145-170. See also Peter G.W. Gutkind, Robin Cohen & Jean Copans (eds) African Labour History (London: Sage Pubs, 1978). Beling recorded in 1965 how "The American Labor Movement..was the moving force behind getting the ICFTU to adopt a strong anti-colonial position..Nevertheless, the Cold War remains a dominant consideration in (its) foreign relations." Willard A. Beling Modernization and African Labor: A Tunisian Case Study (New York: Praeger, 1965) pp. 16-19. Ubeku notes the significance of the AFL-CIO's financial resources in the case of Nigeria; "Even the cost of running the Trade Union Institute for

Economic and Social Development in Lagos was paid for almost exclusively with American aid...Undoubtedly, he who paid the piper was calling the tune." Abel K. Ubeku, Industrial Relations in Developing Countries: The Case of Nigeria (New York: St. Martins Press, 1983) In their book on the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) Luckhardt and Wall observed how "the..AFL-CIO was rapidly extending its influence into the African labour movement..using money and, where necessary, the CIA..(.) Ken Kuckhardt & Brenda Wall, Organize...or Starve: The History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (New York: International Pubs., 1980).

36. Sir Vincent Tewson, at the 4th World Congress of the ICFTU, Vienna 1955. Quoted by Ioan Davies African Trade Unions (London: Penguin African Library, 1966) p. 193.

37. ibid p.40.

38. For a useful discussion of stages theory and the theoretical underpinnings of Soviet policy towards the Third World since the 1920's, see Olle Tornquist, Dilemmas of Third World Communism: The Destruction of the PKI in Indonesia, (London: Zed Books, 1984) Chapter 3, pp. 13-44.

39. Davies, op. cit. Chapter 9.

40. Don Thompson & Rodney Larson Where Were You Brother? (London: War On Want, 1978) Ch.3. See also Ake Wedin International Trade Union Solidarity: ICFTU 1957-65 (Stockholm: Prisma Publishers, 1973).

41. Thompson & Larson op. cit.

42. Davies op. cit p.201.

43. See North-South: A Program for Survival - The Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the Chairmanship of Willie Brandt (London: Pan Books, 1980); Willie Brandt "North-South Division" Socialist Affairs, Socialist International Information, July-August 1979 No. 4/79 pp. 95-98. In 1980 James Petras observed a "veritable explosion of activity by the European Social Democratic Parties.." in Latin America. James Petras "Social Democracy in Latin America," NACLA Report on the Americas Jan-Feb 1980.

44. "TUC Warns U.S. Labour Over El Salvador" International Labour Reports 3 (May-June) 1984 p.17.

45. Venezuela was widely regarded to have come closest to resembling a European social democracy under the leadership of the S.I. affiliate Democratic Action (Accion Democratica - AD) With the end of the oil boom Venezuela has rolled back many of its social reforms and followed the IMF's austerity

recommendations. Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, a prominent S.I. figure, has sought to repair his relationship with Jamaican capitalism in the light of his government's experience during the 1970s. In late 1986 Manley remarked: "to have got into a situation where we quarrelled with our own private sector so badly is crazy...But we (the PNP) work very hard now to get the private sector to understand our sincerity.." Martha Doggett, interview with Manley, NACLA Report on the Americas 20 5 (Sept.- Dec. 1986) pp. 27-35.

46. Levinson op. cit.

47. For a discussion of the New International Labour Studies perspective and its origins, see Cohen "Theorising.." op. cit. and Ronaldo Munck, The New International Labour Studies: An Introduction, (London: Zed Books, 1988).

48. Mike Press, "The Lost Vision: Trade Unions and Internationalism" in For a New Labour Internationalism ed. Peter Waterman, (The Hague: International Labour Education, Research & Information Foundation, 1984). See also W. Olle & W. Schoeller, "World Market Competition and Restrictions on International Trade Union Policies," Capital and Class 2; Ben Sharman "Obstacles to Effective International Collective Bargaining" in American Labor in a Changing World Economy ed. Ward Morehouse. Carnagie Endowment for International Peace. (New York: Praeger Pubs., 1978) and Lloyd Ulman, "Multinational Unionism: Incentives, Barriers, and Alternatives," Industrial Relations 14 1 (Feb. 1975) pp. 1-31.

49. Thompson & Larson op. cit.

50. P. Waterman, Introduction in Waterman op. cit. p.3 See also Waterman (ed) The Old Internationalism and the New: A Reader on Labour, New Social Movements and Internationalism. (The Hague: IPS, 1988).

51. Nigel Howarth and Harvey Ramsay, "Grasping the Nettle: Problems With the Theory of International Trade Union Solidarity," Chapter 5 in Waterman (1984) op. cit.

52. P. Waterman, "Needed: A New Communications Model for a New Working Class Internationalism" Chapter 10 in Waterman (1984) op. cit. p. 246.

53. Cohen, "Theorising.." op. cit. p.23

54. These are discussed from a variety of angles in numerous books. See, for examples, Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison The De-Industrialization of America (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1982); Ernest L Leiberman Unfit to Manage (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988); Martin K. Starr (ed) Global Competitiveness: Getting the U.S. Back on Track (New York: The American Assembly, W.W. Norton, 1988).

55. For an account of these changes, see Mike Davis Prisoners of the American Dream (London: Verso, 1985) Chapters 2 and 7.

56. J. Logue, Towards a Theory of Trade Union Internationalism, (University of Gothenberg, 1980).

57. As Rachel Kamel expressed it, "To an unprecedented degree, rank and file unionists and unions at the local level have become actively involved in direct international communication...Today, many U.S. unionists are more concerned with TNC's (transnational corporations) than with the Cold War vision of rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union." See Kamel op. cit. pp. 67-68

58. Literally every AFL-CIO Executive Council statement on the economy focusses on the need for protectionism in one form or another. The AFL-CIO News has pushed this issue in virtually every edition of the paper in recent years. Innumerable individual unions, such as the ACTWU, ILGWU, UAW and USWA have lobbied Congress for trade protection.

59. AFL-CIO, The Polarization of America: The Loss of Good Jobs, Falling Incomes and Rising Inequality, (Washington, D.C.: 1986).

60. See Kamel op. cit. New York State Governor Mario Cuomo, reflecting on the 1988 Presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson, observed how Jackson "had the single most identifiable and attractive message: When he talks about big corporations going to Taiwan and paying low wages and then selling the goods back to us, people nod their heads in agreement." Wall St. Journal, March 15, 1988. Cited by Kevin Phillips, The Politics of Rich and Poor in America, (New York: Random House, 1990) p.49.

61. While it is true that Central America is a relatively small trading partner of the U.S., it is also true that U.S. investments in the region have had an enormous economic and political impact on the countries of the region. See Tom Barry, Beth Wood, and Deb Preusch, Dollars and Dictators: A Guide to Central America The Resource Center (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1983) For an overview of the New International Labour Studies research areas, see Robin Cohen, "Theorising International Labour" in International Labour and the Third World: the Making of a New Working Class eds. Rosalind E. Boyd, Robin Cohen, Peter C.W. Gutkind (Aldershot, Gower Publishing: 1987) pp. 3-25.

62. Cantor and Schor, op. cit.

63. In the countries cited above, the AFL-CIO has extended its support to the formerly pro-Marcos Trades Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) and has remained severely

critical of the left labour coalition, the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU). It has also supported the hitherto placid unions in the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) which presently (late 1989) face a challenge from a broad left within the Federation. In South Africa, the AFL-CIO supports the unions of Inkatha, the anti-ANC rival of the left federation COSATU. In another important case, Brazil, the AFL-CIO opposes the presently ascendent militant unions who support the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores), preferring the moderate Central General dos Trabalhadores (CGT).

TABLE OF ACRONYMS

- EL SALVADOR -

AGEMHA	General Association of Treasury Ministry Employees (Asociacion General de Empleados del Ministerio de Hacienda)
ANDES	National Association of Salvadoran Teachers (Asociacion Nacional de Educadores Salvadorenos)
ANIS	National Association of Salvadoran Indians (Asociacion Nacional Indigena Salvadorena)
ARENA	Nationalist Republican Alliance (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista)
ASTA	Association of Salvadoran Workers of ANTEL (Associacion Salvadorena Trabajadores de ANTEL)
ASTTEL	Salvadoran Telecommunications Workers Association (Asociacion Salvadorena de Trabajadores de Telecomunicaciones)
ATANTEL	ANTEL Workers National Association (Asociacion Nacional de Trabajadores de ANTEL)
ATRAMSA	Santa Ana Municipal Workers Association (Asociacion de Trabajadores Municipales de Santa Ana)
BPR	Popular Revolutionary Bloc (Bloque Revolucionario Popular)
CCTEM	Coordinating Council of State & Municipal Workers (Consejo Coordinador de Trabajadores Estata las y Municipales)
COACES	Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (Confederacion de Asociaciones Cooperativas de El Salvador)
CST (El Sal.)	Workers Solidarity Coordinating Council (Coordinadora de Solidaridad de Trabajadores)
CTD	Confederation of Democratic Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores Democatica)
CTS	Salvadoran Workers Central (Central de Trabajadores de Salvadorneno)
CUS	Committee for Trade Union Unity (Comite de Unidad Sindical Salvadorenos)
CUTS	United Confederation of Workers (Confederacion Unitaria de Trabajadores Salvadorenos)
ERP	Popular Revolutionary Army (Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo)
FAPU	United Popular Action Front (Frente de Accion Popular Unida)

FDR	Revolutionary Democratic Front (Frente Democratico Revolucionario)
FENASTRAS	National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (Federacion Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadorenos)
FESINCONSTRANS	Federation of Construction, Transportation & Related Industries (Federacion de Sindicatos de la Industria de la Construccion, Transporte y Similares)
FESTIAVTSES	Salvadoran National Trade Union Federation of Workers of the Food, Clothing, Textile, & Related Industries (Federacion Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores de la Industria del Alimento, Vestido, Textil, Similares y Conexos de El Salvador)
FETSALUD	Federation of Health Workers (Federacion de Trabajadores de la Salud)
FMLN	Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional)
FPL	Popular Liberation Forces (Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion)
FSR	Revolutionary Trade Union Federation (Federacion Sindical Revolucionario)
FUSS	Unifying Federation of Salvadoran Trade Union (Federacion Unitaria de Sindicatos Salvadorenos)
ISTA	Salvadorena Institute of Agrarian Transformation (Instituto Slavadoreno de Transformacion Agraria)
MNR	National Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario)
MUSYGES	Labour Unity Movement of El Salvador (Movimiento Unitario Sindicalista y Gremail de El Salvador)
ORDEN	Nationalist Democratic Organization (Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista)
PCES	Communist Party of El Salvador (Partido Comunista de El Salvador)
PCN	National Conciliation Party (Partido Conciliacion de Nacional) El Salvador
PDC	Christian Democratic Party (Partido Democratico Cristiano) El Salvador
PRTC	Central America Revolutionary Workers Party (Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamerica)
RN	National Resistence (Resistencia Nacional)
SETA	Trade Union of ANDA (Water Authority) Workers (Sindicato Empresa de Trabajadores de ANDA)
SIES	Electrical Industry Workers Union (Sindicato de la Industria Electrica de El Salvador)
SIGEBAN	Banking & Savings & Loan General Industry Employees Union (Sindicato de la Industria General de Empleados Bancarios y Asociaciones de Ahorro y Prestamo)
SITAS	Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El

	Salvador (Sindicato de Trabajadores Agricultura, Simitares y Conexos Salvadorenos)
STECEL	Union of Electrical Workers of the Lempa River (Sindical de Trabajadores de la Comision Ejecutivo Electrico de Rio Lempa)
STISSS	Hospital Workers Union (Sinicato de Trabajadores de I.S.S)
STITAS	Salvadoran Union of Workers of the Textile & Cotton Industry (Sindicato de Empleados y Trabajadores de la Industria Textil y Algodon Salvadorena)
STUS	Union of University Workers (Sindicato de Trabajadores de Universitarios)
SUCEPES	Letter Carrier & Postal Employees Union Society of El Salvador (Sociedad Union de Carteros y Empleados Postales de El Salvador)
SUTC	Construction Workers Union (Sindicato Union de Trabajadores de Constuccion)
UCS	Salvadoran Communal Union (Union Comunal Salvadorena)
UNOC	National Worker Peasant Union (Unidad Nacional Obreros y Campesinos)
UNTS	National Union of Salvadoran Workers (Unidad Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadorenos)
UPD	Popular Democratic Unity (Unidad Popular Democratica)

-NICARAGUA-

ANDEN	National Association of Nicaraguan Educators (Asociacion Nacional de la Educadores Nicaraguenses)
ATC	Association of Rural Workers (Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo)
CAUS	Confederation of Action and Labor Union Unification (Central de Accion y Unidad Sindical)
CDN	Nicaraguan Democratic Coordinator (Coordinadora Democratica de Nicaragua)
CGT (Nica.)	General Confederation of Workers (Confederacion General de Trabajadores)
CGT-i	General Confederation of Workers (Confederacion General de Trabajadores - Independiente)
CPDH	Permanent Commission on Human Rights (Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos)
CSN	Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council (Coordinadora Sindical de Nicaragua)
CST (Nica.)	Sandinista Workers Central (Central Sandinista de Trabajadores)
CTN	Workers' Central of Nicaragua (Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua)
CUS	Council for Union Unification (Consejo de Unificacion Sindical)

FAO	Broad Opposition Front (Frente Amplio)
FDN	Nicaraguan Democratic Force (Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense)
FO	Workers' Front (Frente Obrero)
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional)
PSN	Nicaraguan Socialist Party (Partido Socialista de Nicaragua)
UDEL	Democratic Union of Liberation (Union Democratica de Liberacion)
UNAG	National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos)
UNE	National Union of (Public) Employees (Union Nacional Empleados)
UNO	United Nicaraguan Opposition (Unidad Nicaraguense de Opositora)
UPN	Nicaraguan Press Union (Union de Periodistas Nicaraguenses)

-UNITED STATES-

AALD	American Alliance for Labor & Democracy
ACTU	Association of Catholic Trade Unions
ACTWU	Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union
AFGE	American Federation of Government Employees
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
AIFLD	American Institute For Free Labor Development
BAC	International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen
BRAC	Brotherhood of Railway, Airline & Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express & Station Employees
CA/AIM	Central America/Anti-Intervention Movement
CADO	Central America Development Organization
CFT	California Federation of Teachers (CFT)
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CISSE	Information Center for Salvadoran Trade Unionists (Chicago)
CISTUR	Committee in Support of Trade Union Rights
COPE	Committee on Political Education, AFL-CIO
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
CWA	Communication Workers of America
DIA	Department of International Affairs (AFL-CIO)
DSA	Democratic Socialists of America
EC	Executive Council (AFL-CIO)
ENC	Emergency National Council
FTUC	Free Trade Union Committee
FTUI	Free Trade Union Institute
GCIU	Graphic Communications International Union

HERE	Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees
IAM	International Association of Machinists
ICWU	International Chemical Workers Union
ILA	International Longshoremen's Association
ILGWU	International Ladie's & Garment Workers' Union
ILWU	International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union
IMAWU	International Molders & Allied Workers Union
IRD	Institute for Religion & Democracy
IUD	Industrial Union Dept. (AFL-CIO)
IUE	International Union of Electrical Workers
IWA	International Woodworkers of America
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
NUHHCE	National Union of Hospital & Health Care Employees (National 1199)
OCAW	Oil Chemical & Atomic Workers
PATCO	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization
PRODEMCA	Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America
SAG	Screen Actors Guild
SDUSA	Social Democrats of the United States of America
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SIUNA	Seafarers International Union of North America
SLDN	Salvadoran Labor Defense Network
TUSES	Trade Unionists in Support of El Salvador
UAW	United Auto Workers
UE	United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America
UFCW	United Food & Commercial Workers
UFWA	United Farm Workers of America
UFWA	United Furniture Workers of America
UMWA	United Mine Workers of America
USWA	United Steel Workers of America

-INTERNATIONAL-

AUCCTU	All Russian Central Council of Trade Unions
CCL	Canadian Congress of Labor
CGIL	Genral Confederation of Italian Workers (Confederazione Generale Italiane del lanoro)
CGT (Brazil)	General Workers Central (Central General dos Trabalhadores)
CGT (France)	General Workers Central (Central General du Travail)
CLAT	Latin American Workers Federation (Confederacion Latinamericana de Trabajo)
CNUS (Guat'a)	Central Nacional Unidad de Sindicatos
COLPROSUMAH	Colegio Profesional Superior Magisterial Hondureno
CONATRAL	National Federation of Free Workers (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores Libres)

COSATU	Confederation of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Civil & Public Services Association (UK)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSTAL	Permanent Congress of Trade Union Unity of Latin America (Congreso Permanente de Unidad Sindical de los Trabajadores de America Latina)
CTAL	Latin American Workers Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina)
CTC	Cuban Workers' Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores Cubanos)
CTRP	Republic of Panama Workers' Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Republica de Panama)
CTV	Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores Venezuela)
CUPROCH	Confederation of Chilean Professions
CUT (Brazil)	"Unica" Workers Central (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores)
CUT (Chile)	United Workers' Central (Central Unidad de Trabajadores) Chile
FKTU	Federation of Korean Trade Unions
FO	Force Ouvriere
FOMCA	Federation of Central American Teachers (Federacion de Obreros Magisteriales de Centroamerica)
FUTH	United Federation of Honduran Workers (Federacion Unidad de Trabajadores Hondorencs)
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ITS	International Trade Secretariat/s
KMU	May First Movement (Kilusang de Mayo Uno)
MDR	Democratic Workers' Movement (Movimiento Democratico Sindical) Brazil
NALGO	National Association of Local Governement Officers (UK)
ORIT	Inter-American Regional Organization of Labor (Organizacion Regionales Inter-americana de Trabajado)
PAFL	Pan American Federation of Labor
PCF	Communist Party of France
PCI	Communist Party of Italy
PTTI	International Federation of Postal, Telephone & Telegraph Workers
RILU	Red International of Labor Unions
SI	Socialist International
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples Association
SWWU	Seamen & Waterfront Workers Union (Grenada)
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TUC	Trades Union Council (Guiana)
TUCP	Trades Union Congress of the Philippines
TUEL	Trade Union Education League
WCL	World Confederation of Labor
WCOTP	World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession

WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

-MISCELLANIOUS-

AI	Amnesty International
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GAO	Government Accounting Office
ILO	International Labour Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCC	National Council of Churches
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NSC	National Security Council
OPD	Office for Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean (U.S. Dept. of State.)
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
USAID	United States Agency For International Development

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTROVERSY OF AFL-CIO FOREIGN POLICY: DEMOCRATIC INTERNATIONALISM OR TRADE UNION IMPERIALISM?

It has already been stated that a principal concern of this thesis is the challenge, both internal and external, to the international policy of the AFL-CIO which developed as a result of the changed political and economic situation in the U.S. and the revolutionary turbulence in Central America. The objective of this opening chapter is to provide the reader with the historical context and background to the formation, implementation, and consequences of this policy.

The bulk of the available material on the subject polarizes between two essentially politically divided categories, either entirely supportive of the AFL-CIO's international activity, or entirely critical. Academic attention has been scant, probably because the AFL-CIO's support for U.S. foreign policy is considered to be a reflection of "American exceptionalism" and therefore warrants no special attention. Beyond the exceptionalism debate Marxists have traditionally been concerned with the purported appeal of nationalism over class solidarity, the material, political and even psychological effects of imperialism on the

working class in capitalist society, the nature of "dominant" ideology, and other related questions. They too are likely to consider the AFL-CIO's support for U.S. foreign policy to be merely a reflection of the ideological grip capitalism and nationalism has on the working class in advanced capitalist countries. It seems appropriate, therefore, to comment briefly on the on the question of ideology and imperialism as developed by Marxists, and particularly how they penetrate commentaries on working class organisations such as trade unions.

Marxist Discussions on Ideology and Imperialism.

Marxist discussions on ideology have understandably been pre-occupied with explaining why the working class (particularly in the advanced capitalist world) has not fulfilled the historical task Marx claimed it would, that is, the abolition of capitalism. In view of the nature of this thesis, it is perhaps worth remembering that the genealogical shoots of these discussions emerged from political events of enormous magnitude. Lenin authored Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism in large part to provide an explanation for the qualitative degeneration of the Second International, the trade union and working class leaders' inability or unwillingness to prevent inter-imperialist war, and to locate a strata of privileged workers upon which these leaders rested politically. Lenin described the income made by the very rich

countries from capital exports to be "superprofits", a portion of which might be used to "bribe the Labour leaders and the upper stratum of the Labour Aristocracy." [1] In the "epoch of imperialism", wrote Lenin, "the proletariat has been split into two international camps, one of which has been corrupted by the crumbs that fall from the table of the dominant-nation bourgeoisie.." [2] The international labour movement, Lenin observed, was also characterised by "two trends" -revolutionary Social Democracy and opportunism. [3]

Gramsci, in his attempt to come to terms with the rise of fascism in Italy, asserted that the hegemony of the dominant class required deep ideological penetration of all major social institutions. Gramsci identified trade unions as part of "civil society" where the hegemonic class transmits its dominance over the subordinate class. The perpetuation of this class dominance, Gramsci observed, was in one sense facilitated by the nature of trade unions themselves. For him unions were comparable to merchant capitalists because they, too, sold a commodity for the highest possible price - the commodity of labour power. In so doing, trade unions granted ideological hegemony to capitalist relations of production. [4]

More recent Marxist writers have stamped their own mark on this discussion. Althusser, for example, included trade unions among his "ideological state apparatuses" (ISA'a) which help maintain the relations of capitalist production. Unlike Gramsci, who maintained that trade unions could be won to

socialism by means of an ideological struggle waged by revolutionary militants, Althusser's model suggested that the ideological predominance of the ruling class was such that all resistance becomes strangled by ISA tentacles before it had a chance to develop. Stanley Aronowitz, one of the most visible and renowned contemporary commentators on the U.S. labour movement, has claimed that Althusser's theory of ideology has the potential of overcoming what has been described as "the central inadequacies of Marxist theory concerning issues of working class complacency" [5] and "is the most advanced point historical materialism has been able to arrive at in the search for a theory adequate to its object: late capitalist society." [6] Aronowitz's tribute to Althusser testifies to the profound lack of confidence among contemporary left intellectuals in the capacity of the working class in the U.S. to seriously challenge capitalism, to develop as a counter-hegemonic force.

It is perhaps only partially correct to depict Lenin's Imperialism as the progenitor of all the subsequent works in Marxism which have sought to account, at least in part, for the persistence of capitalism through an examination of workers' organisations. However, it is worth noting that the trajectory of subsequent works, beginning with Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, through to Althusser, Poulantzas, Urry, and others, has seen a movement away from Lenin's concern with the international capitalist economy as a critical factor in shaping the political choices and ideology of workers and

their leaders. In an effort to correct perceived rigidities in the base-superstructure metaphor in Marxism, which reduced ideology to an epipheromenal reflection of elemental economic processes, these writers emphasised the materiality of ideology and, with Althusser in particular, established ideology as a central concept in Marxism. [7] Lenin's central argument, that a strata of workers and their leaders benefit from imperialism and therefore to reject revolutionary options, is considered to be, in Aronowitz's words, "a crude sociological doctrine" which "completely ignores the strength of ideology over the working class, not just its leaders." [8] By insisting on the moral perfidy of the workers' leaders, maintains Aronowitz, Lenin sought to avoid the conclusion that the working class as a whole had come under the sway of the ideology of capitalism. Furthermore, in the case of the U.S., "Ideologically, chauvinism, racism and other doctrines that accompany patriotic efforts have had a strong and negative effect on working class conciousness throughout American history." [9]

Aronowitz's criticism of Lenin is suspect in the sense that he appears to completely separate ideology from economy: it is one thing to be alert to the rigidities of economic determimism, but quite another to discount the impact of economy on ideology completely. All consideration of the impact of economic conditions on ideological profile of the working class and its leaders - and attempts to understand the relationship of capitalism and imperialism to "other

doctrines" such as chauvenism and racism - appear to be rejected as crude economism. Aronowitz makes two errors here. Firstly, he vulgarizes Lenin's theory of labour aristocracy and distorts Lenin's understanding regarding "superprofits." According to Lenin, superprofits were not simply repatriated earnings from overseas investments, as Aronowitz believes, but were generated by monopoly capital more generally - including those capitalist monopolies operating in the strategic centres of a national economy. Secondly, to say that Lenin observed a revolutionary working class being held back by their corrupted leaders is itself a crude caricature of Lenin's position. While Lenin failed to precisely identify the labour aristocracy, it is quite clear that he was referring to a whole strata of privileged workers and not merely a few traitorious labour leaders. [10]

Marx stated in The German Ideology that "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." [11] Modern academic Marxism clearly owes a greater debt to the so-named "dominant ideology thesis" than it does to Lenin's labour aristocracy explanations of working class opportunism. However, as Abercrombie, Hill and Turner explain, this body of Marxist opinion itself adopts an excessively rigid interpretation of Marx's dominant ideology notion. They point out that Marx and Engels were aware that the working class developed its own vibrant subordinate culture which differed strikingly from the ideas and values of the ruling class - something Marcuse et. al. appear reluctant to acknowledge.

[12] Empirical studies in the more recent period also provide evidence to support the view that the working class has not been ideologically incorporated. However, as Mann concludes, "it is not value-consensus which keeps the working class compliant, but rather the lack of consensus.." [13] In other words, it is often the case that, within the working class, and within the conciousness of any working class individual, both dominant and deviant values are embraced. Therefore a kind of "dual" or contradictory conciousness can frequently be detected which mitigates against the development of a radical working class politics. [14] These empirical studies, accompanied by a reassessment of Marx and Engels's understanding of dominant ideology, compelled Abercrombie et. al. to conclude that it is erronious to argue that the "stability of late capitalism is mainly produced by any form of ideological or value coherance" and that recent academic Marxism has greatly exaggerated the social role of dominant ideology. [15]

These are valid criticisms. However, it is significant that Abercrombie et. al., in what constitutes a major study of the dominant ideology thesis, make no reference, critical or otherwise, to Lenin's labour aristocracy argument. Neither do they accommodate theoretically the possibility that international economic relationships impact on the ideological profile of the working class. The empirical studies of Mann, Nichols and Armstrong, etc, successfully argue that among the working class there exists a duality of conciousness and

culture. However, the factors which shape this conciousness, and precisely how this happens, remains for the most part inadequately explained.

Interestingly, writers who have challenged the explanatory value of Lenin's Imperialism from the standpoint of economic analysis may ultimately have more to say about ideology than those academic Marxists who have made ideology their central concern. Several writers have questioned the usefulness of Imperialism in understanding (past or present) international capitalism, and have suggested that imperialism has impacted negatively on workers in the colonial and neocolonial countries and on workers in the imperialist countries themselves. For example, in 1971 Barratt Brown argued that, after the initial stages of industrial development, "the maintenance of imperialist political and economic relations..did not benefit the working people of the developed lands." The cost of human lives and military expenditures, aside from other factors, perhaps more than negated any benefits from imperialism that might have existed, and the writer presents strong evidence that, in the contemporary world, workers of the developed countries benefit little by cheap food and raw materials extracted from the underdeveloped countries. [16]

Barratt Brown stands among a group of left writers who maintain that the wealth of the developed countries derives more from advanced technology, higher productivity, and trade between themselves than it is does from plundering the

underdeveloped countries. Moreover, the developed economies are much less dependent on exploitation of the underdeveloped world than the accepted radical wisdom suggests. This has been argued forcefully in the case of the U.S.: a country rich in natural resources, trading largely within its own borders, whose overseas investments amount to a relatively small percentage of GNP. [17] Barratt Brown and others nevertheless agree that the effects of capitalist penetration of the underdeveloped economies are profoundly negative. In terms of working class interests in both locations, each, therefore, have a vested interest in opposing imperialism. From this it might be concluded that a material basis for working class and trade union internationalism presently exists, and may have existed for some time. This is precisely the reasoning which has begun to penetrate U.S. trade unions in the last decade.

Marxist and radical scholarship on the question of imperialism and international political economy has travelled through several phases since Lenin's analysis. It remains a highly complex and contentious area of inquiry, which, in a limited space, can not even be usefully summarised, let alone adequately discussed. The point being made here is that Marxist discussions on imperialism and ideology have largely trodden divergent paths since the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. In one sense a chasm has developed between the two discussions which needs to be bridged, a development which may substantially alter the character of both.

Substantial progress towards this end has been made by

writers who have made class struggle an important element in understanding imperialism (and anti-imperialism). As Cardoso and Faletto express it, "The history of capital accumulation is the history of class struggles, of political movements, of the affirmation of ideologies, and of the establishment of forms of domination and reactions against them." [18] And yet, the trajectory of the discussion on ideology has meant that comparatively little has been written of late which seeks to explain how and why workers do, in fact, struggle against capitalism or the effects of capitalism, or that this struggle is, even in routine "trade union" form, often profoundly worrying for capitalists. A consequence of this neglect appears to be a noticeable disregard for the effects ordinary industrial conflict as well as revolutionary turbulence and change in one place or time can have on situations in another place or time. Portes and Walton allude to this when they say, "(T)he emphasis on material interests and processes of political domination has relegated the circulation of ideas to a secondary and fairly obscure place." [19] In the socialist tradition alone, the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik revolution, the Spanish republic, and countless secondary historical happenings invariably induced new struggles and strategies elsewhere which, in turn, led to ideological reformulations. [20]

It seems, then, that a considerable vacuum exists as far as developing an interactive perspective as a way of understanding ideology, international political economy, and

their combined impact on politics. This thesis focuses on a specific political struggle and its impact on trade union strategy in the present period. However, its contents may be useful to Marxist scholars who are interested in advancing, or even integrating (or re-integrating) theories of ideology and imperialism.

This thesis demonstrates how political struggle in two small countries, Nicaragua and El Salvador, has had a significant effect on working class politics in a country where the ideology of capitalism is widely perceived to be most firmly entrenched, that is, the United States. U.S. capitalism is not about to be toppled as a result; however, an imperialist power which finds itself restrained by broad domestic opposition to military intervention may at some stage find itself in considerable difficulty. [21] Lenin discerned that capitalism became imperialistic by virtue of its need to export capital in order to find fresh opportunities for profitable investment. [22] Direct colonial rule was therefore unnecessary, indeed often undesirable. However, according to Baran and Sweezy, the emergence of the world socialist system (their term) changed the equation. Imperialism now had a "rival and alternative", and this challenge coincided with the eclipse of the nation state by the multinational companies as the new empires of capitalism. These twin developments simultaneously reduced competitive tensions between the major capitalist powers, and erected the Soviet Union and its allies as the principal threat facing all

capitalists. [23]

Military intervention by an imperialist power may therefore not be necessary to the specific function of capital accumulation, but is frequently employed to repel a revolutionary insurgency or even a left reformism which poses a clear or potential threat to political relations which favour capitalism, or to capitalist economic relations themselves. Failure to grasp this point has compelled some writers to explain U.S. intervention as essentially irrational and contrary to the interests of U.S. capitalism. Stephen Krasner, for example, maintains that U.S. foreign policymakers "persistently exaggerated the importance of communist elements in foreign countries" and pursued ideological goals without means-end calculations, goals which actually weakened capitalism by tearing at the internal fabric of U.S. society. Krasner's analysis can be extended to include the AFL-CIO's international policymakers. Such a conclusion derives from the (accurate) assessment that countries like Vietnam and Nicaragua pose no national security threat to the U.S. and are insignificant in terms of capital accumulation. According to this view, U.S. intervention must therefore be the product of a self-defeating ideology. As Philip Brenner expressed it, "Anti-communism has slowly become an end in itself" devoid of any system-sustaining rationale. [24] This argument is flawed because it limits the challenge to capitalism to "communist elements" when any reform movement serious in its objectives constitutes a threat to capitalism in that it may seek to

redistribute wealth and power in society. Moreover, the success of any single reform movement inspires other such movements, thus increasing the overall challenge to capital. Therefore Central America (like Indochina before it) may seem insignificant in terms of capital accumulation, but it may in fact be pivotal in terms of the global political struggle between capitalism and its (diverse) opponents. Moreover, military intervention has taken place because of the aggregate failure of all other forms of (including trade union) intervention to offset the political challenge to capitalism, a challenge that is on view internationally. The fact that the U.S. is being restrained from implementing a more aggressive military "solution" by "public opinion" is, then, to repeat, profoundly significant.

Here again an interactive perspective of ideology and international political economy is useful. As Perry Anderson has expressed it, "If the immediate framework of any given class struggle is national, it is not just its wider economic constraints that are international -but also certain of its political and ideological coordinates, which at times can prove just as inescapable. The dialectic between these determinants is visible for all to see in Central America today." [25] Nicaraguan sociologist Xavier Gorostiaga has referred to "More advanced and progressive proposals which coincide fundamentally with our (revolutionary) analysis are ever more frequent in academic, church..and trade union circles (in the U.S.)" [26] Burbach and Flynn posit that, in

the U.S., "The opposition to intervention in the third world countries now has a substantial social base, particularly within the Black and Latin communities, churches, the women's movement, the intellectual community, some trade unions, and peace, environmental, and third world solidarity activists." [27] In Gramscian language, political change in Central America has generated or reinforced a counter-hegemonic impulse in the civil society of the U.S.

The question of ideology, although not treated in a theoretical way during the course of this thesis, is constantly present throughout. As Brecher has commented, "Economic conditions are creating the basis for labor internationalism, and for a far more progressive attitude on the part of the American labor movement." [28] The ideological content of this "progressive attitude" is explored below. An important ingredient in this change of attitude is shifting working class perceptions of self interest which are themselves linked to actual or perceived changes in the global economy. Anti-communism as an ideology is also a feature of this thesis. U.S. labour is still darkened by the shadow of McCarthyism. The "red-baiting" of trade unionists (which actually dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century) not only still occurs, but seriously hampers the challenge to existing AFL-CIO policies and practices. Those who challenge the Cold War unionism of the AFL-CIO have been accused of Communist sympathies or castigated for being fooled into supporting pro-Soviet positions.

AFL-CIO International Activity: Two Perspectives.

These points made, it is now necessary to return to the subject of this chapter. To repeat: two politically opposed perspectives have developed around the issue of the AFL-CIO's international activities, one critical, the other supportive. In the case of the former, Ronald Radosh [29] and Jack Scott [30] have provided detailed historical treatments of the international policy of the AFL, and later the AFL-CIO, each from their own critical left perspective. Both represent what has been described as the "trade union imperialism school" of commentators, that is, those who view AFL-CIO international policy as a logical and implicitly inevitable extension of U.S. labour's support for U.S. capitalism. [31]

Defenders of AFL-CIO international policy, principally Federation spokesmen and a few sympathetic intellectuals, claim that the AFL-CIO follows a policy of democratic internationalism. The AFL-CIO's agenda is determined not by the needs of U.S. capital, nor by the priorities of U.S. Government foreign policy, but is shaped, they argue, by an implacable opposition to left totalitarianism and right authoritarianism -a "single standard on dictatorships." [32] Thus the AFL-CIO opposed U.S. business' involvement with the Soviet Union and Franco's regime in Spain even though the U.S. Government took a different approach. The AFL-CIO spokesmen claim to reject the expedient and selective approach of the U.S. Government and business to democratic principles, and

consider themselves dedicated to a policy of democratic workers' internationalism. [33]

It remains necessary to sketch the history of U.S. labour's international activities in order to evaluate these conflicting perspectives. Fortunately, this task is facilitated by the fact that both sides agree that the AFL-CIO has been an important international actor, but disagree regarding the motives behind the AFL-CIO's actions. The AFL-CIO's critics argue that the Federation closed ranks behind U.S. imperialism in order to share the spoils of global economic conquest. The AFL-CIO's defenders rebut this charge, maintaining instead that the principal motive behind Federation foreign policy has been a desire to assist democratic trade unionism. This assistance, they acknowledge, contains an ingredient of self-interest. By building healthy and democratic unions in other countries the AFL-CIO is helping to dissuade U.S. companies from relocating outside the U.S. In short, the AFL-CIO is for democratic internationalism as a means of constructing an international high-wage economy.

The History of the International Policies of U.S. Trade Unions.

The history of the international policies of U.S. trade unions is largely a reflection of the twists and turns of U.S. trade union history in the traditional sense. Trade union ("labor") historians basically agree that since the formation

of the AFL in 1886 the U.S. labour movement has been an arena of ideological and political struggle between two largely distinct traditions. The dominant tradition, ably represented for several decades by AFL President Samuel Gompers, emerged from craft and then business unionism. This tradition is ideologically opposed to socialism and broadly accepts capitalism. The minority tradition is much more radical. In this century it has evolved through the anarcho-syndicalist leanings of the Industrial Workers of the World, re-emerging in the 1930's with the communist and socialist components of the early CIO, only to be almost completely submerged in the postwar period.

Numerous writers, including Scott and Radosh, have characterised the conservatism of the AFL in Leninist terms; Gompers' rejection of militant class struggle and socialist objectives merely reflected an opportunistic desire of a skilled strata of workers to share the imminent spoils generated by a U.S. capitalism's commercial domination of the world. Indeed, there is certainly no shortage of statements from past trade union leaders which indicated an acceptance of capitalism bordering on enthusiasm for its accomplishments both domestically and abroad. [34] This accommodation with capitalism is believed to have derived from the adoption of an economistic "pure and simple" trade unionism, or "business unionism", which rejected the manipulation or neglect of workers' day to day demands according to the requirements of idealistic revolutionary doctrines.

Historians have often referred to the AFL's adoption of business unionism as having "developed in the course of an ideological dispute" with Marxism. [35] This view usually combines with an emphasis on the personal contributions of Adolph Strasser and Gompers to the adoption of business unionism's methods and principles. They assert that the period of business unionism or pure and simple unionism began when these leaders finally rejected Marxism, the logic of this rejection required an accommodation with the state, and, by extension, its imperialistic ambitions.

This view appears to accord insufficient importance to the sharply adversarial character of class relations in the U.S. during the period of its economic ascendancy (and beyond), and the difficulties this posed for workers' organisations. In some respects, the carnal nature U.S. capitalism during the post-Civil War "Gilded Age" accounts for the immense ideological space between the two traditions in U.S. trade unionism. The crushing defeats suffered by the unions in the major strikes of the 1890's, at Homestead, Pullman, and Coeur d'Alene, appeared to support Gompers' view that the "trusts" had already grown too powerful to justify head-on collisions, and such power was sure to increase. [36] The AFL, representing mainly skilled white workers, reassured capital and the state that it could be a trusted social partner. This step having been taken, the international arena presented considerable opportunities for the AFL to prove the pedigree of its patriotism. Trade union imperialism, it is

therefore plausible to suggest, was, at least in its early stages, reflective of the one-sided and violent character of the class struggle in the U.S. Put differently, there is arguably a significant political difference between class collaboration as a means of survival and class collaboration according to a straightforward Leninist conception, that is, one motivated by pure and simple opportunism.

It is also worth noting that for a whole period the AFL was itself an arena of conflict between socialists and non-socialists, which further invalidates the notion that Gompers and Strasser "chose" the direction of the AFL. Until the end of World War 1, socialists posed a formidable opposition to Gompers. In 1893, socialists succeeded in getting the AFL convention to adopt its program, which included a call for the collectivisation of industry and during World War 1 itself AFL socialists opposed the Gompers-Wilson war policy. During the war support for the Socialist Party grew and in the AFL Gompers' pro-war policy was opposed in many regions. [37] The radical tradition in U.S. working class history, reflected through the personal histories of Eugene Debs, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Mother Jones, William Haywood, etc., constituted perhaps the only remaining response to the clubs and rifles of "robber barons". The same defeats which pushed Gompers in one direction threw Debs and his comrades in another. Debs had earlier endorsed industrial peace and class harmony; however, the 1890s taught Debs and thousands others that socialist revolution was the only really

progressive option open to the working class. [38] Therefore it seems fair to argue that the divergent ideologies underlying U.S. labour history were at least partly framed by the belligerence of capital towards workers' organisations.

Be this as it may, the two traditions of U.S. labour were reflected in sharp tensions over international as well as domestic policy. The IWW and the Socialist Party, for example, opposed the U.S. involving itself in the European conflict of 1914-18, while the AFL leadership supported President Woodrow Wilson's war policy. [39] Significantly, the internationalism of the IWW during this period extended the organisation to Canada, Mexico, and as far as Australia and New Zealand. [40] In the case of Mexico, the IWW forged an active relationship with the Mexican Liberal party from 1911 to 1920. According to Levenstein, "IWW locals were born and died in many parts of Mexico" a development which prompted the AFL to initiate its own "internationalism" in Mexico for the purpose of protecting "their (the AFL's) back door against revolutionary unionism." [41]

World War One: The AFL shows its patriotism.

The European conflict of 1914-18 marks a critical juncture in the history of U.S. trade union foreign policy. Gompers supported Wilson's war policy in the hope that the AFL's "patriotism" might win it a greater degree of acceptance from both capital and the state. [42] Furthermore, the AFL's

Executive Council successfully urged Wilson to grant AFL officials positions on all defence boards. This period also marked the formation of the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy (AALD) which was subsidised by Wilson. [43] Larson notes how the AFL's pro-war propaganda also attracted financial backing from U.S. business interests: "Significantly, it was the issue of foreign policy that brought about such cooperation. To use today's (1975) terminology, this may have marked the bare beginnings of the military-industrial-labor complex." [44] Scott makes another important observation, namely that the formation of the AALD paved the way for the AFL to play an active role overseas. "(T)he AFL," notes Scott, "sent labour missions to Europe to assist in combatting a rising tide of anti-war sentiment in the European..trade union movement." [45]

World War One, therefore, marked the period when U.S. union officials became integrated into the affairs of state as junior partners to government and business, and became supporters of U.S. foreign policy both at home (fighting against socialist and anti-war sentiment in the unions) and abroad (as union diplomats travelling with U.S. government and business representatives). It was also a period when the AFL leaders' anti-socialism took an important turn. During September 1917 the AALD, in collaboration with the Department of State, expressed support for Kerensky's provisional government, claiming that American workers urged Russia to continue the war with Germany. [46] Following the October

revolution Gompers noted how Russia "was transformed from an ally to a menace." [47] The majority of leaders of the Second International also opposed the Bolsheviks, accusing them of anti-democratic practices. The AFL's opposition, however, went further. Gompers urged an Allied invasion of Soviet Russia to defeat the Bolsheviks who had created "the greatest autocracy existing in any civilized country on the face of the globe." [48] "America," on the other hand, was "an ideal, America is the apotheosis of all that is right." [49] The AFL was also contemptuous of the Second International's who, despite its anti-Bolshevism, was nominally still socialist and therefore not a true ally in the struggle for freedom and democracy. [50]

By the end of the war the AFL's international policy therefore consisted of several ingredients. Firstly, Gompers and the AFL leadership majority pursued a tactical "patriotism for favours" orientation towards the U.S. government. Secondly, Gompers sought to politically contain opposition among sections of the AFL membership to the war, and also approved of U.S. Government repression of the IWW and Socialist Party members for their anti-war activities. [51] Thirdly, Gompers encouraged active opposition to radical trade unionism in the international arena. AFL officials served as "labour statesmen" alongside representatives from government and business. Fourthly, the AFL, in fighting IWW influence in Mexico, unilaterally launched an "internationalism" to protect its hegemony over the domestic labour movement and to

further advance its "patriotism for favours" strategy. Fifthly, the AFL leaders opposed the Soviet Union to the point of advocating Allied military intervention against Bolshevism. Finally, Gompers opposed all strains of socialism, however moderate, and expressed an ideological identification with American liberalism.

An examination of the period to WW1 suggests the notion that the AFL's choice of business unionism lies at the root of trade union imperialism remains only partially correct. AFL trade union imperialism was also partly a product of the peculiarly sharp character of U.S. class relations in the post-Civil War period which contributed to the marked ideological polarisation of the U.S. labour movement. More important, the active character of AFL internationalism can be partly explained by the conflict between the AFL and its domestic and international socialist opponents. The AFL's international activity therefore reflected both its determination to win the protection of the state from the attacks of U.S. capital and its mission to defeat the rival internationalism of the IWW and the Socialist Party. These points do not acquit the AFL leaders from the charge that they sought material advantages from U.S. economic and political expansion; they do, however, suggest that the distinctly active character of AFL labour imperialism arose in part from the ideological tensions in the U.S. labour movement.

It is also important to understand that the AFL's leaders openly identified with the ideology of American

liberalism. It is difficult to say, of course, how much the language of American liberalism was used to legitimise essentially opportunistic behaviour or became a tactic for survival. Labour organisations had been dubbed part of "a foreign and un-American conspiracy;" the AFL leaders were therefore intent on proving their American pedigree. [52] Gompers' hostility to Bolshevism and (albeit to a lesser degree) the reconstructed Second International nevertheless reflected an identification with "American" (essentially Lockian) ideals of individual liberty, freedom of association, and dispersed political power. Indeed, as is well known, these ideals became associated with U.S. commercial and political expansion which, it was argued, "extended the area of freedom" to the "semi-barbarous peoples of the earth." [53] The AFL leaders displayed no fundamental disagreement with U.S. expansionism or the ideals with which it was associated. All opposition was reserved for its socialist opponents both domestically and internationally. [54] Liberal historians such as Hartz frequently refer to the "truly bourgeois" character of the American working class. "The lament of every Marxist," Hartz noted, was the U.S. labour movement's decision to remain "stuck to the concepts of property and individualism." [55] Hartz and other writers in the liberal tradition have stressed the marginal impact socialists had on the "magical alchemy of American life." [56] This view has its adherants in the historiography of U.S. trade unionism. Selig Perlman, a renowned liberal trade union commentator,

long ago encouraged the view that socialist ideas were perpetrated by intellectuals who viewed the labour movement as an instrument of social transformation. American trade unionists, he argued, soundly rejected their exhortations. [57]

It is not possible here to adequately explain the anti-socialism of the AFL leadership majority, which at first glance evokes the much discussed "exceptionalism" of the "American" working class which, in turn, has its roots in a complex arrangement of historical factors. [58] The U.S. labour movement (or rather its leadership majority), however, is not exceptional in the sense that it has displayed a historical tendency to support the foreign policy of its own Government. What is quite exceptional, however, is its ideological hostility to all forms of socialism and its open identification with liberal ideals.

The Challenge of the C.I.O.

For U.S. labour, the period from 1918 to the Depression was one of stagnation and defeat. The AFL leaders' loyalty to the U.S. war effort was rewarded with political and economic attacks by Government and big business, and not the permanent partnership status to which they aspired. [59] According to Weinstein, this situation opened up considerable opportunities for the Left. However several factors intervened during this period which severely retarded the development of

a mass socialist or social democratic party in the U.S. In particular, the U.S. Government took measures - including the infamous Palmer raids - to repress of both the IWW and the Socialist Party that were considerably more severe than those of the McCarthy era following World War Two. [60] Furthermore, ideological disputes that revolved around the Bolshevik revolution and the authority of the Third International split the Left into several fragments during the early 1920s. In Weinstein's view, these splits did not reflect irreconcilable ideological differences and could have been avoided. [61] Had this occurred socialists would have continued to influence the AFL and the prospects of a more radical labour movement internationalism would have perhaps been more favourable than they proved to be throughout the 1920s.

By the early 1930s, following the decline of the Socialist Party and the IWW, the Communist Party became the principal organised challenge to the AFL's conservatism. In the international arena the Third International established the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU), to which the Trade Union Education League (TUEL) became the U.S. affiliate. [62] Several national federations linked to the reconstructed Second International (such as the TUC) formed the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). [63] The AFL, however, remained independent and proceeded to develop its own international network when it moved to establish the Pan American Federation of Labor (PAFL) which formally

connected trade union organisations throughout the American continent. [64]

Like the AALD, the PAFL received U.S. Government funding. [65] Historians largely agree that the PAFL was thoroughly dominated by an AFL concerned to prevent anarcho-syndicalist or pro-Bolshevik sentiment dominating Latin American trade unionism, a concern shared by the U.S. Government. Several large radical federations shunned the PAFL, and considered it to be merely an instrument of the U.S. Department of State. Even within the PAFL the AFL was criticised for, among other things, its failure to condemn the U.S.'s military occupation of Nicaragua, and the organisation lost momentum by the end of the 1920's. [66]

The meteoric rise of the CIO in the mid-1930s split the AFL and threw it into crisis. The industrial unions of the new CIO organised at such a pace that in just a few years their numbers temporarily surpassed the membership of the AFL which had been organising for half a century. The challenge of industrial unionism in the U.S. coincided with a turn to the Left by several labour movements in Latin America. In 1938 several large national federations formed the Latin American Workers' Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina -CTAL) which the CIO supported. The AFL, however, considered the CTAL to be an outpost of Communism. With 40% of CIO unions, 18 in all, led by the CPUSA, and many other CIO leaders such as the Reuther brothers declaring themselves socialist, the U.S. labour movement now seemed

poised to develop an internationalism to rival the AFL's government-supported efforts. [67] The AFL's representational monopoly of U.S. trade unions in the international arena had now ceased.

However, the CIO leaders' (including those supporting the CPUSA) acceptance of New Deal reformism prevented any qualitative change in U.S. trade union attitudes toward the U.S. government. [68] The tradition of the IWW inspired the early CIO militants, but the leaders of the CIO did not replicate the revolutionary internationalism of the Wobblies. Propelled by the combativity of the workers in the mass production industries, the CIO won important concessions from the state, particularly regarding the right to organise. The U.S. Government now appeared as a genuine co-defender of workers' rights. [69]

The political and class dynamics of the New Deal is still a subject of discussion among Marxist and other left academics. [70] Did Roosevelt "save capitalism" by co-opting the CIO leadership? Did the state in this instance better represent the long term interests of capital than the capitalists themselves? Whatever the answers, the end result saw the state appear as an arbiter between the classes, and one not indisposed to ruling in favour of organised labour and "against" capital or certain sections of capital. This had the effect of arresting the potential of the CIO's rival internationalism. [71]

World War Two further cut across the potential for the

CIO's internationalism to become the principal expression of U.S. labour abroad. The CPUSA, following the lead of Stalin after the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, moved from a position of popular frontism and anti-Nazism to all-out opposition to imperialist war. Then, following the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the CPUSA was ordered by Moscow to aid, at all costs, the war effort of the U.S. Government in order to defeat Nazism. This stunning about-turn saw the party leaders become ultrapatriotic, and to actively intervene to restrain and discourage worker militancy during the war period. [72]

The anti-Nazi alliance and the characterisation of the Soviet Union as a trusted ally of the United States facilitated a similar anti-Nazi unity in the international trade union movement, opposed only by the AFL. In 1945, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was formed with CIO, TUC, CTAL, and Soviet trade union (AUCCTU) participation. The IFTU disintegrated. CPUSA writers have referred to this period as a rare and cherished moment of international trade union unity, a position which has also penetrated many of the present day commentaries on international trade union politics. [73] In fact, the RILU had by 1936 ceased to exist, and in 1943 Stalin dissolved the Third International. The revolutionary premises and early record of the outgoing International contrasted markedly with the cautious trade union diplomacy of the incoming WFTU. The dissolution of the Third International, however, was merely a surgical

confirmation of the Stalinization of international Communism since the death of Lenin and the subsequent defeat of the Left Opposition within the Bolshevik party in the 1920s.

CIO leaders spoke favourably of their new Soviet trade union allies, playing down the issue of Soviet state-labour relations which obsessed the AFL. [74] The AFL refused to participate in the trade union version of Allied unity, and continued, reportedly against Roosevelt's expressed wishes, to criticise Soviet oppression of political opponents in Eastern Europe. In 1944 the AFL organised the Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) to provide assistance to non-communist trade unionists in European countries formerly under Nazi occupation. The AFL leaders feared that "Soviet-backed communist trade union leaders might emerge from their well organized underground resistance movements to fill a political leadership vacuum in European labor before democratic elements could reorganize." [75] Defenders of the AFL and AFL-CIO foreign policies have argued that their "trade union imperialism" critics fail to adequately account for the "great significance of this (Roosevelt-AFL) disagreement on the single most important issue of the immediate post-war era" which, they maintain, proves that the AFL pursued its own principled (as opposed to opportunistic) international agenda. In other words, the AFL had its own international policy and perspective based on a commitment to democracy and an authentic ideological opposition to Communism. [76]

The evidence that the AFL has maintained a consistent

opposition to Communism is incontrovertible. Indeed, the AFL opposed the U.S. Government's recognition the Soviet Union in 1933. For Robert Cox, the differences between the AFL and the U.S. Government on this and other occasions are, however, far from fundamental. They are no more significant than the perennial tensions between the CIA and the Department of State, and none of them reflect deep ideological divisions. Cox, marrying Lenin's notion of labour aristocracy and Gramsci's understanding of hegemony, concludes that a hegemonic corporatist model, where there exists "a high degree of interpenetration of trade union, government, and business, accompanied by a division of labor in the pursuit of common goals" offers the best means of understanding AFL and AFL-CIO foreign policy. Conflict within the corporatist coalition "will be subordinated to the maintenance of cohesion vis a' vis the rest of domestic society...and foreigners whose actions are perceived as challenging the international extensions of this hegemony." [77] Cox's view that the AFL's international policy merely constituted one of several viewpoints within the corporatist coalition sounds convincing. However, the AFL's anti-Communism survived the period from the end of WW1 to the New Deal when the labour movement was politically and economically marginalised by the combined efforts of capital and the state. This reinforces the view that the AFL's ideology maintained a certain consistency no matter what the status of domestic labour-capital-state relations. Furthermore, Cox appears reluctant to acknowledge

that the anti-Communism of the AFL was anything more than a prejudice developed by a handful of union functionaries such as AFL vice-president Matthew Woll, David Dubinsky of the ILGWU, and Jay Lovestone, the former Secretary General of CPUSA who was expelled because he clashed with Stalin over the expulsion from the CPSU of Nikolai Bukharin. Lovestone, according to one CPUSA writer, was compelled by "a hunger for revenge" for decades following his expulsion. [78] This axe-grinding, it is implied, re-commissioned the services of the AFL and the AFL-CIO to U.S. capitalism overseas. As will be discussed below, the impact of Stalinism and the position of the U.S. in the postwar world provided firm foundations for Cold War unionism, even if the articulation and execution of such a policy rested on the shoulders of a few individuals.

U.S. Trade Unions, Post War Europe and the Cold War.

The AFL played an active role in fighting the influence of pro-Moscow trade unionism in early post-war Europe. In discussing this period, both critics and defenders of the AFL's international activity again lay special emphasis on the role of a few key individuals. FTUC functionaries Jay Lovestone and Irving Brown are two important figures. The significance of the ideological tension in U.S. labour in shaping the AFL's international policy is again in evidence: both Lovestone and Brown had worked as consultants to UAW leader Homer Martin in his unsuccessful struggle against the

Reuther brothers, who he tried to depict as Communist. [79]

The trade union imperialism writers tend to depict the intervention of the AFL in early post-war Europe as an exercise in splitting healthy and militant trade unions with the use of U.S. Government and CIA money. One source describes how, "In a matter of a few years (the AFL's) European representative, Irving Brown, helped in breaking up and substantially weakening the labor movements of Western Europe. This he did by aiding the formation of new labour federations to undercut the strength of progressive unions." [80] Another attributed the divisions in the French labour movement to the AFL which encouraged and financed the Force Ouvriere (FO), a conservative union federation which split from the CGT in 1947 and still functions. [81] Galvin also acknowledges the AFL's impact, pointing to Brown's claim that it was the AFL's actions which reduced the 7 million membership of the communist CGT to just 2 million. [82] It is also claimed that Brown hired thugs to break a 1949 strike of French dockers who refused to unload U.S. arms shipments. Brown allegedly "selected candidates for leadership of the French trade unions. Then he reported back to the U.S. Government and various multinational corporations, which put up the money for these men to run for union office." Similar charges have been made in the case of Italy. [83]

Defenders of the AFL's policy in Europe also stress the enormous significance of the Lovestone-Brown operations. Gershman, for example, clearly regards them as a critical

factor in defeating the "Soviet trade union strategy in Europe" [84] Heaps, writing in 1955, referred to the AFL's intervention as one of "outstanding strategic importance" [85] Former CIA agent Thomas Braden has expressed a similar view. "..in 1947 the communist CGT led a strike in Paris which came near to paralyzing the French economy. A takeover of the government was feared. Into this crisis stepped Lovestone and..Brown. With funds from Dubinsky's union (ILGWU), they organized Force Ouvriere, a non-communist union. When they ran out of money they appealed to the CIA. Thus began the secret subsidy of free trade unions..Without the subsidy postwar history might have gone very differently." [86] Lorwin also points to the significance of the AFL's financial assistance, commenting that the "FO as a new organization battling a well-provided and entrenched CGT would hardly have started on dues payments alone." [87]

It cannot be denied that the AFL helped split the European trade unions in the early postwar period. However, the allusion that Lovestone and Brown, with a suitcase of CIA dollars, must take responsibility (or credit) for this requires serious scrutiny. Both pro and anti-AFL writers neglect important features which make up the broader picture, such as the economic power of the U.S. and its influence on European labour, the role of the Communist Parties as well as their social democratic opponents internationally, and the significance of perennial ideological divisions within European labour which reasserted themselves following the fall

of Nazism.

The strength of the U.S. economy during this period requires little elaboration. The U.S. was the only major capitalist power to emerge from WW2 economically strengthened. The economic and human resourses of the Soviet Union, in contrast, had been exhausted by the war. [88] Both supporters and critics of the AFL refer to the Marshall Plan as the "issue" which led to the demise of the WFTU and projected the AFL into a position of leadership of the non-Communist international labour movement. However, the "issue" essentially embodied what was qualitatively different about Soviet and U.S. strategies and capabilities during this period.

The Plan contributed huge sums of capital towards the resurrection of European capitalism. Moreover, support for the Plan among trade unions in the U.S. was solid with the notable exception of the CPUSA-led unions, such as UE, ILWU and the National Maritime Union. European workers celebrated openly as industrial and consumer goods, raw materials, etc, poured across the Atlantic and provided a boost in employment and spending power. The Italian general election of 1947 was fought around the Plan; supporters of the Christian Democrats made it clear that U.S. aid would cease if Italy voted Communist. The Italian CP (PCI) opposed the Plan and were heavily defeated. [89]

The actions of the French and Italian CPs must also be central to any understanding of European labour during this

period. Radosh's account stands alone among the trade union imperialism writers in that it describes how, in particular, the French CP (PCF) "played into the hands" of Brown and the AFL. The PCF supported the post-war government and acted, as Brown himself observed, "as a brake on the economic demands of the workers", and encouraged labour restraint and discipline. [90] Carew makes a similar point in the case of the CGIL, the trade union federation linked to the Italian CP (PCI). The CGIL in 1946 and early 1947 "was palpably failing to protect the economic interests of its members" largely as a result of the PCI "presenting itself as a non-revolutionary party of reconstruction, content to collaborate with bourgeois parties in coalition government." [91]

The real options available to the PCF and the PCI between 1945-47 is, of course, a contentious subject. What is clear, however, is that mass support for both parties declined. By 1947, following Moscow's orders, the PCI and the PCF launched an all-out campaign against the Marshall Plan, which, in part because of their earlier actions, led to major splits in the French and Italian labour movements. [92]

The splits which did eventually occur in many cases mirrored the divisions in European labour before the period of Nazi expansion. The forces of social democracy, despite disagreements with the U.S., resumed their opposition to the CP's. So too did christian democracy and other centre-right and right political formations. The war had seriously damaged the economies of France, Italy and Germany and in doing so

eroded the material underpinnings of working class reformism. Now a "new opportunism" emerged with the Marshall Plan. European trade union leaders were grateful for the crumbs falling not from the table of their own bourgeoisie, but from the table of another capitalist power, the United States. After 1948 the post-war economic expansion moved into top gear and thus further reinforced reformist trade union ideas and practices.

In neglecting these factors both critics and supporters of the AFL tend to distort and exaggerate the impact of the Lovestone-Brown operations. However, it would be mistaken to conclude that the AFL's intervention was unimportant. It is not possible to predict with any degree of certainty the extent to which the political landscape of Europe might have been different if the AFL had not chosen to intervene in the way that it did. Yet the evidence suggests that the policies pursued by the major actors of the period left considerable space for moderate trade unionism to eventually develop without AFL assistance. Carew records that the CIA did not provide cash for labour projects until 1948; before then Lovestone and Brown relied on donations from AFL affiliates and other trade union supporters which totalled around $200,000. Despite limited funding, "Brown was having no difficulty finding sympathetic contacts," and in France during 1946-47 these funds were "sufficient to grease the wheels of anti-communist labour group activity.." [93]

The AFL can safely be regarded as a significant actor

in the shaping of post-war European labour, but the implication that they were the principal force behind the severe divisions which emerged is not supported by the evidence. At this point the ingredients which combined to create the U.S. labour movement's international policy were somewhat different than those following World War One. Firstly, Gompers' "patriotism for favours" strategy had been rendered relatively redundant by the explosive growth of organised labour in the 1930s and Roosevelt's accommodation of trade union leaders. The U.S. labour movement was far weaker in 1914 than was the case in 1940.

Secondly, while the AFL's opposition to all shades of socialism was apparent even before 1917, the CIO's eventual opposition to Communism evolved by degrees. The domestic tactics of the CPUSA hardened the opposition of the CIO's social democratic wing. While anti-Communism provided the moral and ideological basis for U.S. capitalist expansionism, it had also penetrated the consciousness of entire layers of U.S. workers. Khrushchev's revelations of Stalin's atrocities, and the events in, for examples, Czechoslovakia (1947 and 1968), East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), and, more recently Poland and Afghanistan ensured that anti-Communism retained its potent ideological pull on workers in the U.S. and beyond. Davis has highlighted the "alarming impact" the USSR's postwar actions in Eastern Europe had on the ethnic communities of the U.S. which made up half of the CIO membership, and how this has been frequently overlooked

in analyses of the U.S. working class since 1945. [94] Moreover, these events also helped decimate the CPUSA as a political force. The hostile climate created by the Cold War and McCarthyism purged the CPUSA from key areas of U.S. political and cultural life. The bulk of its membership, however, stayed with the party. Importantly, it was the period following the death of Stalin, coinciding with the East German and Hungarian uprisings, which caused major defections. Between 1956-58 the CPUSA lost 80% of its membership. [95]

In 1949-50 eleven CPUSA-led unions were expelled from the CIO which, in turn, withdrew from the WFTU in May 1949 alongside the TUC and other major national federations. The formation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), urged by the AFL, completed the Cold War division in the international labour movement. The new Cold War consensus of the AFL and the CIO in international policy paved the way for the merger of the two formations in 1955. The shared Cold War perspective of the two further undermines the thesis that business unionism is, in and of itself, the source of the U.S. labour movement's support for U.S. foreign policy. The CIO was born from militant industrial unionism and class confrontation, in the teeth of opposition from the bulk of the AFL. Despite these contrasting traditions, both now broadly shared the same world view. The Truman doctrine became the rhetoric of the AFL and CIO leaders, although the latter ensured a social democratic colouration of U.S. trade union international policy. While it can be argued that the

CIO had, by the 1955 merger, had lost its early radicalism and adopted the methods and outlook of business unionism, it is too simplistic to state that these were indistinguishable from the methods and outlook of business unionism during the Gompers'-era AFL. The labour movement of the post-WW2 period rested on the achievements of the 1930s, saw the U.S. lead an enourmous global economic expansion, and had observed the international rise of Stalinism. At this point, the U.S. labour movement had been propelled into a position of political leadership of non-Communist trade unionism internationally.

The Cuban Revolution and AIFLD.

The success of the Marshall Plan in Europe inspired talk of a similar approach to assist the economic development of Latin America. The AFL-CIO openly supported investment by U.S. companies throughout the subcontinent to stimulate jobs at home, bring prosperity to Latin American workers, and to prevent Communism taking hold in the region. [98] As a necessary corollary to the development of liberal capitalism in Latin America, the AFL-CIO openly endorsed its own "model" of trade unionism, "which corresponds to American labor's own conception of the proper role of trade unions in a free society." [97]

Following World War Two the left-wing Latin American union confederation CTAL went into a decline which paralleled

the fragmentation of the WFTU. The formation of the ICFTU in 1949 led to the creation of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Labour (Organizacion Regionales Inter-americana de Trabajado -ORIT) in 1951. By 1962 every Latin American country had an ORIT affiliate, and by 1966 the organisation claimed to represent 28 million workers in the Americas. [98] While ORIT was officially the American continent's section of the ICFTU, the AFL made efforts to insulate ORIT from European social democrats who were perceived to be susceptible to a more cooperative arrangement with Communism and the WFTU. [99]

The AFL-CIO's political domination of ORIT is frequently presented as another manifestation of trade union imperialism. The writers of this genre describe how the AFL-CIO created unions and union leaders in its own image, and, in collusion with the U.S. Embassies and the Department of State, facilitated splits in the labour movements along left-right and/or Cold War lines. The ORIT affiliates generally displayed consistent loyalty to the capitalist industrialization model, and explicitly rejected class struggle methods in favour of gradualism and collaboration with capital and the state. [100] The AFL-CIO's hegemony in ORIT is mainly attributed to its financial resources which effectively purchased the loyalty of a whole strata of trade union leaders throughout the subcontinent. [101]

The Cuban revolution in 1959 prompted the U.S. to instigate measures to reaffirm its hegemony in the region.

U.S. policymakers accepted that Latin America was fertile territory for revolution. The Kennedy Administration launched the Alliance For Progress in 1961, offering $20 billion in aid for the decade to 1971, and urging Latin American heads of state to pursue political and social reform. The U.S.'s Agency For International Development (AID) helped implement the Alliance by providing, inter alia, long-term, low-interest loans to Latin American entrepreneurs. [102]

From the outset, the twin themes of "free trade unions" and "free enterprise" were stressed in the language U.S. legislation pertaining to the Alliance. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, states that the Congress recognises the "vital role of free enterprise in achieving rising levels of production standards of living essential to economic progress and development." Section 601 of the Act states that it is U.S. Government policy to "strengthen free labor unions." The Latin American Development Act stated that Congress "supports the strengthening of free democratic trade unions to raise standards of living through improved labor-management relations." A Brookings Institute study of 1963 commented that the "free and independent trade unionism" became the "policy beacon for both government and organized labor assistance to labor movements abroad." The study surmised that "in general terms it (the legislation) seems to imply a model of unionism that 1) is primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with the economic function of collective bargaining to win benefits for the worker, 2) is

not linked with or/and controlled by a government or political party, 3) has no Communist connections..The only labor movement whose operations accord with all three of these specifications is that of the United States." [103]

In 1962 the AFL-CIO, U.S. corporations, and the U.S. Government created the American Institute For Free Labor Development (AIFLD). AIFLD developed the Communication Workers of America's (CWA) program of training Latin American trade unionists. In that year AIFLD received $350,000 from the AID as part of the Alliance For Progress, and AIFLD's board of directors was composed of business as well as trade union leaders. As Weinrub and Bollinger express it, "Among the 95 U.S. corporations that pledged support and funding for AIFLD were some of the most powerful companies in Latin America, including Anaconda Copper, Coca Cola, and ITT.." [104]

The formation of AIFLD consummated the AFL-CIO's foreign policy relationship with the U.S. Government and the U.S. multinationals. All agreed that Communism had to be contained in Latin Americas, that "free" labour could play an important role. Moreover, AIFLD reflected the domestic institutional relationships of the postwar social pact. It projected the liberal industrial relations model that had grown out of the pact and accepted without question its universal applicability in Latin America. [105] AIFLD's first director, Serafino Romualdi, expressed it in classical liberal-pluralist terms:

> "The concept of the various economic power elements in a free society working together..became the most

> fundamental credo of the Institute..And it was in tribute to this concept that business representatives were asked to join with labor in the management and support of the Institute. Furthermore, labor in the U.S. does not subscribe to class struggle. It believes in the free enterprise system, subject to limitations and controls designed to prevent dangerous monopolies and abuses, but a free enterprise system nevertheless." [106]

In addition, however, AIFLD also reflected the concerns of the moment; there were those in ORIT who initially expressed a certain support for Castro who they believed to be a liberal democrat leading a legitimate struggle to rid Cuba of a hated dictatorship. [107] Castro, however, was accused of purging ORIT's Cuban affiliate, the Cuban Workers Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores Cubanos -CTC) of its non-Communist leadership soon after the insurrection, which resulted in a hardening of ORIT attitudes against the new government. [108] All of ORIT's affiliates, with the exception of the Canadian Congress of Labor (CCL), registered support for the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. [109]

Despite its eventual rejection of Castro, ORIT, like the PAFL before it, had shown itself to be susceptible to counter-hegemonic impulses, and was therefore viewed to be an unreliable weapon in the struggle against Communism. Even before the Cuban revolution Romualdi detected the source of tension, remarking that "North American labor was a firm believer in free enterprise" which clashed with those who called for "economic planning..socialistic methods and criticising the 'imperialistic manifestations of U.S. economic policy in Latin America.'" [110] AIFLD's function was to

ensure that U.S. labour, capital, and the state had a vehicle which would it could control unilaterally, even though ORIT would continue to operate. The AFL-CIO now had two "internationalisms" in Latin America. AIFLD reflected the corporatist arrangements at the top of U.S. society, promoting the interests of U.S. capital and the state within a liberal developmentalist ideology. To complement this, the weight of the AFL-CIO in ORIT bore down upon any tendency to lean towards European social democracy which might weaken ORIT's anti-communist programme.

To its many critics AIFLD is the epitome of trade union imperialism. The very fact that approximately 95% of AIFLD's budget comes from the U.S. Government and that representatives of U.S. capital with major interests in Latin America supported AIFLD is enough to accord the Institute pariah status in certain trade union and political circles. AIFLD's source of funding is not a subject of dispute, although top AFL-CIO officials have frequently denied allegations of CIA involvement in its activites. Godson and other defenders of AIFLD and AFL-CIO foreign policy do not deny that a working relationship between AIFLD and the CIA was established and continues to operate either on an occasional or consistent basis. Indeed, the AFL-CIO has never indicated that cooperation with the CIA conflicts with its understanding of trade unionism, nor has it criticised the CIA for its methods.

The disclosures of former CIA agents (such as Philip Agee who referred to AIFLD as a "CIA controlled labor center")

and trade union leaders (such as Victor Reuther) make it virtually certain that the CIA and the AFL-CIO's international affairs personnel have actively and consciously supported each others objectives on numerous occasions. [111] AIFLD's activities in Latin America (discussed below) also point to this conclusion. This thesis offers no hard evidence of a CIA-AIFLD connection, but it does demonstrate AIFLD's support of CIA objectives in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Radosh's conclusion of two decades ago that, "In reality, a close working relationship exists between the State Department.. the CIA and the AFL-CIO" appears equally appropriate in terms of AIFLD's activities in Central America during the 1980s. [112]

De-Stabilization of Foreign Governments.

Accounts of AIFLD's activities are frequently scathing. Scott, Radosh and Spalding have pioneered studies of AIFLD, and its role in Latin America has been the subject of innumerable articles and pamphlets. Many of Scott et. al.'s findings and formulations about AIFLD have penetrated the mass of books that have been written on Central America in recent years. [113]

Again, lack of space prevents a review all of the material on AIFLD or to provide the reader with anything like a comprehensive account of the activities of the Institute. The principal routine activity of AIFLD, however, is training of trade unionists from Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to its own records the total number of trade unionists participating in AIFLD's courses from 1962 until 1985 is a staggering 503,000. [114] Most were trained as part of AIFLD's in-country programs, although 4,300 received training in the U.S. at the AFL-CIO's George Meany Institute in Maryland. In Nicaragua and El Salvador during this same period, AIFLD claims to have trained a total of 26,807 trade unionists. [115]

Former CIA agent Philip Agee has claimed that AIFLD's training programs have been an area of considerable CIA activity. [116] The training courses themselves have served as a transmission belt for the anti-communism and liberal developmentalism characteristic of the Truman doctrine. The training manuals used by AIFLD articulate this philosophy in quite unambiguous terms. [117] In the Institute's view, U.S. foreign policy is determined by a legitimate fear of Soviet expansion, which can be effectively countered by capitalist development: "Preventing the world balance of power from tipping too much in the USSR's favor thus requires successful, non-Communist industrialization in the developing countries." U.S. military intervention, it maintains, occurs only if U.S. national security is threatened, therefore "Latin American countries...can follow social reformist development strategies without incurring the opposition (of the U.S.) so long as they do not climb in bed with the Russians." It is, however, acknowledged that economic interest also helps determine U.S. foreign policy and U.S. trade unions regard these interests

as their own. Thus, the AFL-CIO plays a role in "U.S. foreign assistance" because the U.S. has an interest in terms of markets to help LDC's (Less Developed Countries) industrialize, which also means "the humanitarian interests of the Europeans and North Americans are advanced." [118] In another manual, the objective of social democracy is described as "TO GRANT EVERYONE AN EQUAL RIGHT TO RISE AS HIGH AS HIS TALENTS PERMIT" (blocks in original). Furthermore, Locke, Jefferson, and Montesquieu are offered as the champions of democratic thinking, and Marx, Engels and Lenin are depicted as the fathers of totalitarian communism. [119] In sum, AIFLD's training material openly and uncritically identifies with the economic, ideological, political, and military aspects of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

AIFLD's critics maintain that the extensive resources of the Institute have been used to contaminate a whole layer of Latin American and Caribbean trade unionists with pro-U.S., pro-capitalist, and anti-communist opinions. Moreover, William Doherty, AIFLD's Executive Director since 1965, claimed in 1983 that Institute graduates occupied at least 70% of the executive board positions of "free trade unions" in Central America. [120] Perhaps the most serious charge to be levelled against AIFLD is that the Institute and its graduates contributed significantly to the de-stabilization and overthrow of left-wing governments such as the Popular Unity in Chile in 1973. According to one source, "The total extent

of AIFLD's work in preparing the ground for the Chilean coup has not yet been uncovered, but there is no doubt that as in earlier adventures in Brazil, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and other countries, AIFLD was a key factor." [121] Precisely how key the AIFLD factor was in the fall of left governments is, predictably, a subject of some controversy. What is clear, however, is that AIFLD and its trainees did actively intervene at several critical junctures in the postwar history of Latin America, and either instigated or supported activities against left reformist governments.

In the early 1960s AIFLD actively opposed the Jagan regime in Guyana. According to Spalding, as well as Jagan himself, "CIA agents worked as labor people, AIFLD maintained anti-Jagan trade union leaders on its full-time payroll" [122] The U.S. Department of State suspected that Jagan's reformist government might embrace Cuba and the Soviet Union, noting that, while "perhaps not a disciplined communist, (Jagan) had the kind of pro-communist emotion which only sustained experience with communism could cure." [123] As Barnett records, "The major U.S. sponsored anti-Jagan campaign in Guiana was conducted through the labor unions. A CIA agent, Gerald O'Keefe, posing as an official of the Retail Clerks International Association; William McCabe, inter-American representative of the AFL-CIO; and a host of or other U.S. labor officials flocked to the British colony in 1962 and 1963..They established contact with the Trade Union Council (TUC) an anti-Jagan union, headed by Richard Ishmael, who had

been trained in the U.S. by AIFLD." [124]

Jagan's fall came in 1964 following British intervention which changed Guyana's electoral laws which preventing Jagan, who acquired a plurality of the votes in the election, continuing in power. However, perhaps the real damage was inflicted during an 80-day general strike called by the TUC to protest the government's labour relations bill which intended to abolish company unions and strengthen the more combative unions. [125] The U.S. public sector union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees' (AFSCME) has admitted that its international affairs office channelled cash relief to the strikers provided by the CIA. This relief, according to Jagan, totalled $1.2 million. [126] As George Meany commented at the time, "in British Guiana..Institute graduates are participating in the fight against the Cuba-oriented government of Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan." [127]

Meanwhile the reformist government of Joao Goulart in Brazil became a focus of U.S. concern. Goulart had been elected in 1960 by a large margin and the government's proposals for land reform and limited nationalizations inspired a working class and campesino movement which met enormous opposition from the Brazilian middle class and bourgeoisie. In 1964 Goulart was overthrown by a military coup, supported by a section of the Brazilian Congress and the U.S. Government. The coup began a period of severe political repression in Brazil; hundreds of trade unions were closed

down. AIFLD's William Doherty exclaimed before the U.S. Congress in 1968 that "What happened in Brazil did not just happen..it was planned..Many of the trade union leaders--some of whom were actually trained by our Institute--were involved..in the overthrow of the Goulart regime." [128] Or as Romualdi expressed it, "I feel justified in saying that democratic labor played a decisive role on that fateful day in Brazil's history." [129] The moderate unions in the Democratic Workers' Movement (Movimiento Democratico Sindical -MDR) opposed a general strike planned by the left unions to protest the coup, and reportedly used their strategic occupational positions to keep open the military's lines of communication. [130]

In the Dominican Republic during the same period, several accounts have described how AIFLD helped create a split in the labour movement when it helped form the National Federation of Free Workers (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores Libres -CONATRAL). CONATRAL opposed the reformist government of President Juan Bosch, and openly called for the military to save the country from Communism. The military obliged, and a U.S.-supported coup overthrew Bosch in 1963. A broad-based movement to restore civilian rule was quashed when the U.S. invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965, an act which installed the right-wing regime of Joaquin Balaguer. ORIT and the AFL-CIO endorsed the new government. [131]

AIFLD's alleged part in the coup in Chile in 1973 is particularly controversial. The Institute has been accused

of working to weaken union support for the Allende government. The Professional Employees union, maritime workers, and communications workers reportedly fell under AIFLD's influence. In May 1971 AIFLD helped form the Confederation of Chilean Professions, (CUPROCH) which supported the truck owners' strike which preceded the coup. Even this strike was led by a recent graduate of AIFLD. Union leaders associated with AIFLD and ORIT have been accused of aiding the military in its execution of the coup. [132] Allende himself, in a broadcast made minutes before his death, spoke of "those patriots who a few days ago were continuing to struggle against the revolution led by the professional unions. That is the class unions who were trying to hold on to the advantages granted to them by a capitalist society." [133]

The fall of Jagan, Bosch, Goulart, and Allende was openly welcomed by the AFL-CIO. Pertaining to Chile, the Executive Council passed a resolution which declared that "a majority of the Chilean people..accepted the coup as a necessary act." [134]

AIFLD's Interventions: A Perspective.

Neither the AFL-CIO or AIFLD have denied that they played a role in the demise of the governments in the manner described above. Godson and Gershman, however, have refused to discuss in any detail AIFLD's role in Chile and elsewhere. At a general level, Godson has attempted to justify trade

union intervention in this way: "the AFL-CIO maintains that democratic governments and trade unions must sometimes involve themselves in the affairs of other states when the latter are seriously threatened by foreign intervention or by domestic totalitarian forces aided by foreign powers. As a result, American labor has occasionally been put in the position of supporting Western efforts to prevent what it believes to be Soviet..inspired attempts to gain control of noncommunist governments." [135] In other words, the AFL-CIO adopts the same criteria for intervention as the U.S. Government, and therefore acts as an auxiliary to that intervention.

Godson and others' refusal to counter the specific accusations of the trade union imperialism writers, however, perhaps reflects the fact that none of the cases referred to above sits comfortably with the criteria for intervention he (or the U.S. Government) expresses. Firstly, these cases contradict AIFLD's claims that a Latin American country has the right to determine its own economic methods and destiny ("so long as they don't jump in bed with the Russians"). Consider the example of Brazil. In Romualdi's own words, Goulart was attempting "land expropriation and the nationalization of all private petroleum refineries. These measures, if carried out, would have pushed Brazil further down the road to a socialist state." [136] Romualdi makes no allusion that Goulart's program constituted a threat to U.S. national security or that it was, in Godson's words, a "Soviet inspired attempt to gain control of a noncommunist

government." Such a suggestion would be preposterous.

Secondly, the slipperiness of State Department definitions of communist and communism (Jagan's perceived "pro-communist emotion" substitutes for any formal party affiliation) is shared by AIFLD and the AFL-CIO Executive Council majority. Therefore in reality any left challenge to U.S. hegemony is depicted as communist, thus potentially pro-Soviet or Soviet inspired and a potential threat to U.S. national security which must be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Thirdly, the consequences of intervention in these cases have invariably been disastrous. Indeed, it is necessary to note that all of the de-stabilized governments referred to above were democratically elected, and that the AFL-CIO, having welcomed their demise, then moved to condemn the successor regimes which its actions had actually helped bring to power. For examples, in 1965 the AFL-CIO criticised the post-coup Branco government in Brazil for having "recently become an authoritarian regime. It has curtailed civic political rights and liberties, and the Brazilian labor movement has been forced back to its original status -an integral part of the state." [137] In the case of Chile, Pinochet's blanket repression of the labour movement incurred the opposition of the AFL-CIO three years after the fall of Allende. [138]

Fourthly, as Galvin notes, the AFL-CIO has not shown anything like the same determination to disrupt the political

rule of the dictatorial right. AIFLD's refusal to work with the left, its belief that gradual reforms are possible under dictatorship conditions, that the pursuit of these reforms constitute the only acceptable political option for the labour movement, leads the "democratic unions" into a symbiotic relationship with right-wing dictatorships. This has the effect of partially legitimising those regimes (Godson refers to such regimes as "less than democratic") and the repressive measures the regime may employ against "subversives" who are perceived to be sabotaging the only opportunity to achieve reforms, that is, long term collaboration with the dictatorship itself. [139]

It is for these reasons that the specific charges of the trade union imperialism writers have passed without visible challenge from defenders of AFL-CIO foreign policy; to do so would lay bare all the inconsistencies and contradictions which lie between the theory and practice of the AFL-CIO's "democratic internationalism."

The principal objective of the trade union imperialism writers has been to expose the actions of the AFL-CIO in the hope that this might generate opposition to its international operations both inside and beyond the labour movement. Cox, Galvin, and Levenstein are among the few writers who, while apparently sharing this basic objective, have tried to penetrate the surface of the AFL-CIO's international policy and offer more theoretically developed explanations. However, the trade union imperialism approach to Latin America appears

to suffer from the same inadequacies that emerged in its account of the AFL's role in postwar Europe. Attention has again focussed on a formal conflict-free history of the AFL-CIO, and particularly the attitudes and predilections of its leaders. On one level, this seems quite appropriate: the U.S. labour movement has a notorious record of support for U.S. intervention and U.S. foreign policy generally. Moreover, it is a widely accepted fact that the broader membership of U.S. unions have had no say whatsoever in the formulation and execution of trade union foreign policy, certainly since the consolidation of the postwar pact. [140] On another level, however, this approach again neglects the broader picture and particularly the part played by other actors.

In Latin America since the 1960s ORIT affiliates have been numerically dominant in most countries. Of the estimated 20% of Latin American workers organised in unions, the ORIT represents a clear majority. The extent of this majority, however, is uncertain. ORIT's largest affiliates are to be found in Mexico (approximately 6.5 million members); Argentina (5 million) and Venezuela (1 million). Add to this the Brazilian CGT (6 million) which is supported by AIFLD and ORIT but, for jurisdictional reasons, is not affiliated, and the picture of ORIT's dominance nevertheless becomes clear. [141]

There can be little doubt that the AFL-CIO's enormous resources have played a significant role in keeping the ORIT generally friendly to the U.S. Furthermore, AIFLD graduates

frequently occupy positions of leadership in ORIT's affiliates. However, AIFLD's training programs, notwithstanding their scope and ideological character, or any other Institute activity, do not sufficiently explain the moderate political orientation of many trade union federations in Latin America.

The charge that AIFLD "brainwashed" hundreds of thousands of trade unionists only serves to deflect attention away from possibility that the model of trade unionism promoted by the AFL-CIO was, at certain junctures, genuinely attractive to certain sections of trade unionists. Harrod records how in Jamaica, "The coming of the American model in the early 1950s..intensified the debate about political unionism, and brought new organizations and individuals as advocates of foreign models." Certain Jamaican unions "used North American practices as example (sic) of what should be done in Jamaica," in full knowledge that "the growing number of employers in Jamaica from the USA expressed a desire for the trade union practices current in their own country." [142] In other words, some trade unionists advocated the so-called American model fully cognizant of the fact that it conformed to the expressed wishes of U.S. multinationals. This is hardly surprising. The U.S. labour movement could point to some clear material achievements in wages, benefits and conditions during a period of unprecedented economic growth in the U.S. Furthermore, during the 1950s and 1960s Latin America and the Caribbean also witnessed a period of sustained

economic expansion. The Executive Council of the AFL-CIO noted in 1964 that Brazil's growth rate was second only to that of Japan, and that the national growth rates for all Latin American countries ranged from 4.4% to 10.3% per annum. [143] Capitalism was creating the wealth, all that remained was for labour to win its share - as seemed to be the case in the U.S. In Argentina, as Carlos Diaz notes, "AIFLD acquired significant influence within the labor bureaucracy and established an extensive network;" however, "AIFLD's task was facilitated by the existence of an incipient labor bureaucracy, whose consciousness had its roots in the social democratic and syndicalist trends in Argentine labor history and the Peronist class alliance of 1945-55." Significantly, "monopoly capital provided the material basis for the growth of a relatively privileged sector of the working class." [144]

In the case of Brazil, Harding describes how Goulart's reformism during the period leading to the coup resulted in a clear polarisation in the working class. "The accelerated radicalization of the most politicized workers," he observed, "seperated them from those who had not become so radicalized." Again, AIFLD's role in Brazil needs to be viewed in the light of fairly elemental divisions among Brazilian workers during this period. [145]

In Venezuela AIFLD expressed great enthusiasm for the government of Romulo Betancourt which came to power in 1958 following the fall of the Jiminez dictatorship. Betancourt's

party, the social democratic Accion Democratica, extended support to the ORIT affiliate the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Venezuela -CTV) which expelled its CP-led unions in 1963. Wages became the highest in Latin America, the left was marginalised, and the labour movement under CTV hegemony became a social partner of the government. The AFL-CIO supported Betancourt, while the U.S. Government remained content to support the Jiminez dictatorship. The example of Venezuela served as a model for AIFLD in the years ahead: liberal democracy, economic growth, reforms, and a marginalized left -a perfect combination. There can be little doubt that Venezuela's oil wealth and overall economic performance provided the material basis for a sustained period of reforms and the relative stability of Venezuela's political structures. [146]

AIFLD's critics maintain that the Institute's activities constituted an act of naked imperialism. However, they frequently ignore or downplay the fact that significant sections of organised labour in Latin America also accepted the liberal capitalist development model, either fatalistically in the case of much of the left, or enthusiastically in the case of the more conservative trade unions. In one way or another, Latin American workers made their own choices concerning the political direction of their respective countries, a fact that which frequently gets submerged in the pile of criticisms levelled against the AFL-CIO and AIFLD.

As with Europe, another major inadequacy or omission on the part of the AFL-CIO's critics lies in their reluctance to critically evaluate the ideas and method of the Latin American left in the post-war period. Thus the story runs: The AFL-CIO and the U.S. Government begat ORIT and AIFLD, and both went about their task of deflecting Latin American and Caribbean trade unionism from a more "progressive" destiny. Virtually no discussion, however, occurs regarding the various alternatives presented by the left in general to the AIFLD-ORIT reformist formula. Again, it is understandable that these writers might feel such a discussion complicates the task in hand, that is, to expose the trade union imperialism of the AFL-CIO. This approach, however, risks inflating the significance of the U.S. labour movement's political intervention and fails to consider the possibility that the left, in this or that instance, or over a longer historical period, might have actually enhanced the effectiveness of the AFL-CIO's intervention.

The postwar political history of Latin America and the Caribbean islands is too diverse to lend itself favourably to generalisations pertaining to "the left" and what it did or did not do during this period. Indeed, just a cursory glance at the post-war history of the left in the region reveals a patchwork of ideologies and strategies. In terms of left trade unionism, however, two currents of thought (excluding Peronism and left Christian Democratic or "socialichrisitian" trade unionism) are important because they transcended

national boundaries and posed some degree of opposition to the ORIT.

One of these currents was promoted by the communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union. These parties established a presence in some Latin American countries, particularly Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Costa Rica and Panama following the Bolshevik revolution and the establishment of the RILU. [147] The CPs provided political leadership to certain trade union federations who then became identified with them. Politically, the CPs in Latin America adhered to popular frontism in the 1930's and anti-fascism following the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. While this required the CPUSA support Roosevelt, in Latin America the same policy demanded CPs support dictators like Somoza in Nicaragua and Batista in Cuba. [148]

In the postwar period the disintegration of the left-wing CTAL, where CP-influenced union federations had a clear voice, ushered in a period of ORIT hegemony over organised labour in Latin America. Moreover, after 1950 and the withdrawal of the CIO, TUC, and other non-communist national federations, the WFTU became numerically and politically dominated by the Soviet trade unions. The WFTU's policy towards Latin America replicated that of Stalin and the CPSU; the region was a legitimate "sphere of influence" for the U.S. In the trade union arena, this entailed the WFTU effectively surrender the region to ORIT. [149]

The WFTU eventually established a presence in Latin

America in 1964, when the Chilean United Workers' Central (Central Unica de Trabajadores -CUT) initiated the formation of the Permanent Congress of Trade Union Unity of Latin America (Congreso Permanente de Unidad Sindical de los Trabajadores de America Latina -CPUSTAL). In the period 1964-1982, CPUSTAL secured 22 national affiliates. [150] Although no data is readily available, CPUSTAL's resources were probably no more than a fraction of those of AIFLD and ORIT. Furthermore, although estimates vary, the CPUSTAL is thought to represent between 2 and 4 million workers in Latin America compared to 12 million formally affiliated to the ORIT. [151]

The motive behind the formation of the CPUSTAL is unclear. The organisation was formed in a period when the CPs faced the prospect of being out-flanked from the left throughout the region in the wake of the Cuban revolution and Castro's more combative profile. The platform of CPUSTAL, agreed at a 1967 gathering of CPUSTAL and WFTU representatives in Prague, was a cautious one which called for "unity of action" between Latin American unions at national and regional levels around "humanist principles." [152]

The fall of Batista marked the beginnings of Castroism as a political current in Latin America, and tensions between Castro and the orthodox CPs were openly expressed. At the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966, the dominant perspective urged the escalation of guerilla warfare throughout the region; China, Cuba, and Vietnam had

demonstrated the validity of armed struggle based on the peasantry as a means of achieving state power in the underdeveloped world. The trade unions were considered, at best, only an auxiliary force in the armed conquest for power. At worst, they had degenerated into electoralism and economism to the point of being defenders of existing economic and political relationships. [153] It seems plausible to suggest that the CPUSTAL was launched as a measure in part to counter actual or potential Castroite influence over the Latin American labour movements.

The thrust of Castroism, however, was towards the peasantry, which reduced its influence over the trade unions. However, the failure of guerilla campaigns to ignite rural rebellion, and Cuba's growing economic dependency vis a' vis the Soviet Union, brought Cuba more in line with Soviet policy for the region. The fall of Allende in 1973 (which resulted in the decimation of the largest CPUSTAL affiliate, the Chilean CUT), completed a generally bleak picture for the left during this period: both guerillaism and electoralism had ended in disaster.

Is it probably no coincidence that ORIT, during this same period, had reached the peak of its organisational strength. Aside from the relative success of the capitalist growth model, the widespread repression of the left, of which Chile was just the latest example, enhanced the attractiveness of ORIT. [154] A high-profile relationship with the AFL-CIO, given the Federation's close contact with the U.S. Embassies,

served as an insurance policy (with perhaps only limited coverage) for trade unionists who feared government reprisals. [155]

It is much too simplistic to assert that ORIT's hegemony in Latin American trade unionism rested entirely on the policy choices of the CPs and Castroite left. The point here is that the Left offered no real alternative to the capitalist development model in a period of relative economic expansion and frequent bouts of state-sponsored repression - a point that deserves serious consideration in any evaluation of the general state of trade union politics in the region in any given period, including an examination of the impact of the AFL-CIO. This, however, does not mean that the without such an alternative the moderate reformism of ORIT will go unchallenged. Indeed, during the profound economic difficulties faced by Latin American workers during the 1980s several ORIT affiliates took up a more militant posture, and AIFLD and the AFL-CIO were openly criticised. The contrasting realities of the U.S. and many Latin American economies, even in a period of mutual growth, frequently created tensions in the ideological cohesion of ORIT. [156] A realignment of forces within ORIT as much as a resurgence of the traditional left union federations may yet prove to be an integral part of the external challenge to the international policy of the AFL-CIO.

Conclusion.

This opening chapter has tried to meet two broad objectives. Firstly, it has attempted to provide the reader with essential information regarding the basic historical features of U.S. labour movement foreign policy and its significance. Secondly, it has attempted to convey how existing treatments of this subject have been somewhat incomplete in one or more respects.

The openly partisan character of the bulk of the material on this subject has perhaps obscured as much as it has revealed about U.S. labour's international activities. Defenders of U.S. labour's Cold War policy present the AFL-CIO as heroic "spearheads for democracy" in an unrelenting struggle against left and right totalitarianism. The weight of evidence, and the unwillingness of these writers to address the substantive allegations of the AFL-CIO's critics, seriously weakens the argument that the AFL-CIO is a proponent of democratic workers' internationalism unless the widely accepted definitions of both democracy and internationalism are completely re-evaluated. The trade union imperialism writers have sought to expose the role of the AFL-CIO's international network in supporting U.S. foreign policy. They note that for decades the DIA and AIFLD have engaged in a perversion of international labour solidarity. While agreeing with the main political thrust of these writers, I have argued that this approach offers an over-cohesive and monolithic view

of U.S. labour, and generally rests much too heavily on the claim that the business unionism of Gompers and the AFL lies at the root of U.S. trade union imperialism. It is at best only partially correct to depict the AFL's international forays as imperialistic in the sense that the principal motivations of the AFL replicated those of U.S. capital and the U.S. Government. The AFL leaders, at least from 1905-1919, became active internationally to counter the rival internationalism of the IWW and the domestic challenge posed by the Socialist Party, to prove its worth to the U.S. Government in the hope of win an ally in the unequal struggle against U.S. capital, and to defeat anti-war and socialist opposition in its own ranks and in the broader U.S. labour movement. This is not to say that the AFL leaders did not foresee material advantages for themselves and their members in the U.S. becoming the world's foremost economic power. However, the ideological polarisation of the U.S. labour movement made its own contribution to the distinct character of AFL international policy during this period.

The rise of CIO industrial unionism in the 1930s and the highly significant role of communists and socialists challenged the AFL domestically and to a limited degree internationally. The development of a new labour internationalism, however, was retarded by Roosevelt-CIO accomodation, New Deal reformism, and, eventually, World War Two. During this period the various policy shifts of the CPUSA (against the New Deal, then for it, against the war,

then in favour) also helped prevent the Left developing a clear challenge to the AFL's international policies. The CIO's affiliation of the WFTU at a time when the Soviet Union was temporarily a military ally of the U.S. meant that the AFL's opposition to Communism erected a barrier between it, the U.S. Government, and the bulk of the international labour movement. In the postwar period the consolidation of Cold War unionism coincided with the purge of the CIO left. This and the split in the WFTU brought the AFL full circle into a position of leadership within the new ICFTU. Domestic ideological conflict now receded as an important factor shaping U.S. labour's international stance. However, certain differences did persist between the more social democratic elements of U.S. labour (such as the UAW) and the AFL old guard. These differences came to the surface during the Vietnam War when the UAW left the AFL-CIO protesting Federation support for President Johnson's war policy. (See Chapter Four).

The history of U.S. labour's international policy is therefore punctuated with important periods of domestic conflict. Indeed, the period from the purge of the CIO in the late 1940's until the UAW departure in 1967 (less than two decades) stands out as the only portion of U.S. labour history where such conflict either disappeared or was without real significance. The period from 1967-1980 marked a gradual strengthening of the liberal and social democratic forces in the labour movement. Following 1980 and the beginning of the

Reagan period, the tension between this wing of labour and its more conservative opposite manifested itself in split over U.S. policy in Central America. This schism is hardly comparable to the AFL-IWW divide or the AFL's rivalry with the early CIO, but it is symptomatic of the tensions in the U.S. labour movement set in motion by the end of the postwar consensus. Underlying these tensions pertaining to foreign policy are potential disagreements over domestic policy. This was somewhat reflected in the fact that the forces behind the internal challenge to Cold War unionism are the same as those who urged labour movement support for the Presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson in 1988, a position not shared by Kirkland and his allies on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. Jackson's anti-interventionist U.S. foreign policy position accompanied the call for "economic justice" in the U.S. In other words, the split over Central America may be a harbinger a deeper polarisation in U.S. labour around "domestic" questions in the years to come.

In this chapter I have also argued that the trade union imperialism accounts have tended to understate or bypass the role played by other actors in the international arena. In Europe and Latin America the AFL and the AFL-CIO clearly reinforced existing tendencies in the labour movements, tendencies that opposed Soviet Communism or Stalinism, supported the Marshall Plan and the Alliance for Progress, and, perhaps similar to the AFL in its first decades, sought partnership with capital and the state and the (frequently

violent) exclusion of their more leftward labour movement rivals. Moreover, trade union imperialism writers tend also to downplay or ignore the impact of Stalinism on broad sections of the working class internationally and how the East bloc experience, and the subservience of the Communist Parties to Moscow, has seriously harmed the development of a socialist alternative to capitalist postwar reconstruction in the case of Europe or capitalist industrialization in the case of Latin America and other regions of the third world.

All told, a more balanced and flexible view of U.S. trade union imperialism is needed which accords sufficient weight to role of other actors. This is particularly necessary in view of the substance of this thesis: the internal and external challenge to AFL-CIO Cold War unionism and the impulse towards a new internationalism emanates from several simultaneous and interrelated developments. These include the end of the postwar social pact in the U.S. and the return of open conflict between the state and labour, the failure of the liberal capitalist development model in vast areas of the third world (manifested clearly in the case of Central America), and the revolutionary trajectory of workers' and peasants' struggles in a growing number of locations. Furthermore, the present trends in social democracy and the elemental crisis of Stalinism, in that they have shaped the ideological profile of the international labour movement, are also enormously significant.

Evaluating the respective significance of these factors,

as well as important contributions of key individuals, is clearly a formidable challenge. However, the value of a more balanced and, I believe, a more dialectical approach to this question is that, aside from being closer to complex realities, it shines greater light on the dynamics of change and how such dynamics might be reinforced. As the following chapters hopefully make absolutely clear, there are certain changes in trade union ideology and methods which are long overdue.

Chapter Two of this thesis traces the AFL-CIO's and AIFLD's policy of liberal intervention in El Salvador beginning in the mid-1960's. The failure of both political and economic reforms sharpened class-conflict during the 1970's, culminating in the development of a revolutionary situation in 1979-80. The turning of the tide against the left opened the floodgates of a brutal repression in 1980-83 which decimated the radical unions and fueled what was to become a protracted guerilla struggle against the Salvadoran regime. The Salvadoran experience attracted attention to AIFLD and its methods, raising before a wide audience fundamental questions about AFL-CIO internationalism and its consequences.

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7. Boswell, et. al. op. cit. p.7.

8. Aronowitz, op. cit. p.158.

9. ibid.

10. Lenin considered the "bribery" of the labour aristocracy as something much more substantial and significant than "under the table" payoffs. This bribery is done, siad Lenin, in "a thousand different ways: by increasing cultural facilities in the largest centres, by creating educational institutions, and by avoiding co-operative, trade union and parliamentary leaders with thousands of cushy jobs..It is these thousands of millions in superprofits that form the economic basis of opportunism in the working class movement." V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, (Moscow Publishers, 1977) Vol. 31, p. 230.

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20. Somewhat ironically, the forces of reaction -the Salvadoran oligarchy can safely be used as an example- in their routine physical extermination of their "subversive" opponents, seem to have a greater instinctive grasp of this phenomenon than the left intellectuals who might be expected to explain and evaluate it.

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28. Jeremy Brecher, "Crisis Economy: Born-Again Labor Movement?" Monthly Review, 35 10, (March 1984) p.23.

29. Ronald Radosh, American Labor and United States Foreign Policy (New York: Random House, 1969)

30. Jack Scott, Yankee Unions, Go Home: How the AFL Helped the U.S. Build an Empire in Latin America (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978).

31. I believe the first writer to refer to the notion of a trade union imperialism "school" was Peter Waterman.

32. AIFLD, U.S. Labor's Single Standard on Dictatorships (Washington, D.C.: 1985)

33. Thomas Kahn, (then Asst.to the Pres. AFL-CIO, later head of the AFL-CIO's Dept. of International Affairs) "Foreign Policy: Labor's View of the World" Presentation, Representative Assembly, New York State United Teachers, NYC, 1982. Circulated by the DIA, AFL-CIO Wash. D.C. See also Arnold Beichman, "Alternative Perspectives on Labor's Foreign Policy" (Washington D.C., Georgetown Uni. International Labor Program, 1974) Reprinted in American Federationist October 1974.

34. Meany's enthusiasm for capitalism is well documented. However, even in the 1920's when organised labour was fighting for its very survival, AFL President and successor to Gompers William Green clearly acknowledged "The right of the employer to manage his industry, to control it and to receive a fair profit on his investment should be maintained and recognised." William Green speech, 1925. Cited by C. L. Tomlins, The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America (Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.82.

Foster Rhea Dulles in 1949 wrote that American labour has consistently demonstrated a "basic faith in democratic capitalism" -a philosophy that made it distinct from labour in Europe. See Foster Rhea Dulles, Labor in America (New York: T.Y. Crowell Co., 1949) pp. 377-378.

35. H.M.Gitelman, "Adolph Strasser and the Origins of Pure and Simple Trade Unionism," Labor History 6, (Winter 1965) pp. 71-83. See also P.Taft, "On the Origins of Business Unionism," Industrial and Labor Relations Review 17 1,

(October, 1963).

36. Bernard Mandel, "Samuel Gompers and the Establishment of AFL Policies," Social Science 31 3, (June 1956) pp. 165-176.

37. Simeon Larson, Labor and Foreign Policy: Gompers, the AFL, and the First World War (London: Associated University Presses, 1975) See also Mike Davis, Prisoners of the American Dream (London: New Left Books, 1985) pp. 32-34.

38. See for example Ronald Radosh (ed.), Debs Great Lives Observed Series, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971).

39. Larson, op. cit. Ch.1.

40. For an account of IWW activities in Australia, see Ian Turner, Sydney's Burning (Sydney: Alpha Books, 1967) Palmer has recorded that while the IWW "made few inroads into Eastern Canadian industrial communities..their impact in the west was great." The IWW could be found "anywhere across Canada" and by 1912 there existed "a dozen large (IWW) locals stretching from Victoria to Winnipeg." See Bryan D. Palmer, Working Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980 (Toronto & Vancouver: Butterworth, 1983).

41. Harvey A. Levenstein, Labor Organizations in the United Sates and Mexico: A History of Their Relations (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1971) pp. 6-10. See also Philip S Foner's "Founding of the Pan American Federation of Labor" Chapter XII in P.S. Foner U.S. Labor Movement and Latin America: A History of Workers Response to Intervention Vol.1 1846-1919 (Mass. Bergin & Garvey, 1988).

42. Larson op. cit. p.32.

43. According to Radosh government "support and control of the AALD was a prototype of the secret subsidies of American labor unions by the Central Intelligence Agency during the 1950's and 1960's." Radosh, American Labor.. op. cit. p.70.

44. Larson op. cit. p.45.

45. Scott op. cit. p.156.

46. Years later, Irving Brown, the AFL-CIO's Director of International Affairs, stated that Kerensky represented "a victory for democratic forces in Russia." The Bolshevik intervention "stifled this progress and later led to the foundation of a totalitarian Soviet state." See Irving Brown, preface to Roy Godson, Labor in Soviet Global Strategy (New

York: National Strategy Information Center, 1984) Preface p.ix.

47. Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1967) Vol.II, p.400, cited by Radosh, American Labor... op. cit. p.99.

48. Radosh, American Labor.. op. cit. p.167 & p.255.

49. Gompers, Nov 8, 1918, cited by Radosh, ibid. p.181.

50. Gompers, op. cit. p 431.

51. See Larson op. cit. Ch. 9.

52. R.O. Boyer and H.M. Morais, Labor's Untold Story (New York: United Electrical and Machine Workers of America, 1984) p. 16.

53. The U.S., said Gompers, "must forever remain the asylum and a breathing spot for all who dare brave danger for freedom's sake, and seek refuge from persecution of tyrany and despotism." Quoted by Philip Taft, The A.F.L. in the Time of Gompers (New York: Harper & Row,1970) Copyright 1957, p.443 ff. See also Maurice F Neufeld, "The Persistence of Ideas in the American Labor Movement: The Heritage of the 1830's" Industrial and Labor Relations Review 35 2 (January 1982) pp. 207-220.

54. 1931 leading AFL figure Matthew Woll expressed fear of "European influence" over Latin american workers. The AFL (and PAFL) needed to engage in "intensive activity" to avert such an outcome otherwise "the American ideal -the ideas of the New World, will suffer and perhaps perish." Matthew Woll, quoted by Joseph Carwell, The International Role of U.S. Labor (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1956) p. 112. See also William Appleman Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962) Second Edition. Chapter Two.

55. Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955) p. 301

56. ibid.

57. Selig Perlman, The Theory of the Labor Movement, (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

58. For a discussion see Davies op. cit. Ch. 1. & Walter Galenson, "Why the American Labor Movement is Not Socialist," The American Review (Winter 1961) pp. 1-19.

59. William Green, Labor and Democracy (Princetown

University Press, 1939) pp. 68-95 & Larson op. cit. pp. 159-161.

60. Indeed, an authority on the Socialist Party, James Weinstein, noted that the state andstate-encouraged persecution and repression of the SP "so far exceeded what during the 1950's came to be known as the terrors of McCarthyism as to make the latter appear to be an era of tranquility." See James Weinstein, The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925. (New York: Vintage Books, 1969) p. 172.

61. ibid. pp. vii-xi.

62. Bert Cochran, Labor and Communism: The Conflict That Shaped American Unions (Princetown: 1977) p.21 & p.44.

63. According to the Webbs, the RILU claimed only 750,000 affiliated members in 1927 who were in organizations outside the Soviet Union. In 1930, the Red International, or Profintern as it is otherwise known, called for a "united front" against capitalism throughout the world. The Amsterdam or Second International, they noted, "refuses to make any kind of alliance, or undertake any common enterprise, in a body (the RILU) which glories in existing for purposes definitely criminal under the laws of the (European) states..and which is avowedly directed from Moscow, and is universally supposed to be under the control of the Politbureau of the Communist Party of the USSR...we cannot help thinking that..the avowed interference of Moscow in the internal affairs of other countries actually militates, by the nationalist resentment that it creates, against the progress of communism itself." See Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation, Vol.1 (London: Private Subscription Edition, 1935) pp.214-217.

64. Sinclair Snow, The Pan American Federation of Labor (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964).

65. Radosh American Labor.. op. cit. pp. 352-353.

66. M.P. Troncoso and B.G. Burnett, The Rise of the Latin American Labor Movement, (New Haven CT: College and University Press, 1960) pp.129-132. See also H.A. Spalding, Jr. Organized Labor in Latin America (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) pp. 252-255.

67. Cochran op. cit. p.208.

68. Sidney Hillman, for example, had encouraged the formalization of corporatist arrangements between labour, capital and the state at least since the twenties. See R.Radosh, "The Corporate Ideology of American Labor Leaders From Gompers to Hillman," Studies on the Left, Socialist Scholars Conference, Vol.6, No.6, 1966 pp.67-88.

69. See Christopher L. Tomlins, The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) Chapters 4 & 5.

70. See, for example, Thedea Skocpol, "Political response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the case of the New Deal," Politics and Society 10 (1981) pp. 155-211.

71. Trotsky observed, "The rise of the CIO is incontrovertible evidence of the revolutionary tendencies within the working masses. Indicative and noteworthy in the highest degree, however, is the fact that the new "leftist" trade union organization was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state. The struggle among the tops between the old federation and the new is reducible in large measure to the struggle for the sympathy and support of Roosevelt and his cabinet." Leon Trotsky, On Trade Unions (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975) Second Edition p.73.

72. Nelson Lichtenstein, Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War Two (Cambridge University Press, U.K: 1982).

73. CPUSA leader W.Z. Foster declared that the WFTU not only represented the interests of the world proletariat but "represented a far greater international trade union organization numerically than the workers had ever before been able to create." See William Z. Foster, History of the Three Internationals: The World Socialist and Communist Movements from 1848 to the Present (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1968) Reprint, copywright International Publishers, 1955, pp. 466-467. See also Ann Fagan Ginger & David Christiano, The Cold War Against Labor Studies in Law and Social Change (Berkeley, CA: Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute, 1987) Vols. 1 & 2.

74. Michael Kerper, The International Ideology of U.S. Labor, 1941-75. University of Gothenburg: Research Section of Post-War History, Publication, No.6, 1979 pp. 24-25.

75. Roy Godson, "Corporate Unionism: An Erroneous and Misleading Theory of American Labor's International Involvement." Labor Studies Journal 6 3 (Winter 1982) pp. 302-316.

76. William A. Douglas and Roy S. Godson, "Labor and Hegemony: a Critique." International Organization 34 1 (Winter 1980) pp.149-158.

77. Robert W. Cox, "Labor and Hegemony: A Reply," International Organization 33 2 (Spring 1978) p.167.

78. George Morris, CIA and American Labor (New York:

International Publishers, 1967) p.68

79. Donald Thompson and Rodney Larson, Where Were You Brother? (London: War on Want, 1978) p.7. See also R. Godson, "The AFL Foreign Policy Making Process From the End of World War Two to the Merger," Labor History Summer 1975 pp. 325-327 Godson describes how the ILGWU set aside considerable resources to the FTUC.

80. William Bollinger and Alan Weinrub, The AFL-CIO in Central America (Oakland, CA: Labor Network on Central America) p.6.

81. Daniel Cantor and Juliet Schor, Tunnel Vision: Labor, The World Economy, And Central America Policy Alternatives for Central America and the Caribbean (Boston, MA: South End Press) 1986.

82. Miles Galvin, "American Labor's Foreign Policy" Unpublished Manuscript, Dept. of Labor Education, State University of New Jersey, Rutgers, New Brunswick, 1984. p. 28; Carl Gershman The Foreign Policy of American Labor (Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1975) p.23

83. Thomas Braden, formerly of the CIA, disclosed that CIA funds to the AFL reached $2 million by 1950. Braden, claims to have personally delivered $15,000 in CIA cash to Brown "to pay off his (Brown's) strong-arm squads in American ports so that American supplies could be unloaded against the opposition of communist dockworkers." Other ex-CIA personnel told Kwitney, a Wall St. Journal reporter for 13 years, that the CIA continued to fund Irving Brown's operations at least until 1969. See Jonathan Kwitney, "The Corruption of Domestic Organizations: The AFL-CIO" in Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World (New York: Longden and Weed, Inc., 1984) pp.339-347. Godson claims that even if the AFL did receive CIA funds it still exercised autonomy over its actions. Godson, "The AFL Foreign Policy..." p.333.

84. Gershman op. cit. p. 25

85. D. Heaps, "Union Participation in Foreign Aid Programs," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 9 1 (1955) pp. 100-108.

86. T.W.Braden, cited by Sidney Lens, "Partners: Labor and the CIA" The Progressive, February, 1975.

87. Val W. Lorwin, "France" in Comparative Labour Movements ed. Walter Galenson (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968) pp. 372-373

88. For examples, steel production stood at only 50% of pre-war levels, and agricultural production stood at 60% See

Charles L. Mee Jr., The Marshall Plan: The Launching of the Pax Americana (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1984) p.57, p.97 & p.239. See also Antony Carew, Labour Under the Marshall Plan (Manchester University Press, 1987) Chapter 3 & p.10.

89. Mee op. cit. pp. 246-263.

90. Radosh, American Labor.. op. cit. pp.316-317; Gabriel Kolko, The Politics of War: The World and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1943-45 (New York, 1969) pp. 439 & 443.

91. Carew op. cit. p.29 & p.21.

92. ibid p. 38. Fernando Claudin's assessment might be usefully recalled here: "At that time (in 1945-46) the mass of the proletariat was under the leadership of the Communist parties..In other words, in 1944-45 only the Communist Parties could halt the revolutionary movement of the proletariat (in France and Italy), and in practice this is what they did." See F. Claudin, The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform (London: Penguin, 1969) pp.316-317 & p.343.

93. Carew op. cit pp. 66-67.

94. Mike Davis, op. cit. p. 90. See also Lichtenstein, op. cit. p.238.

95. For an account of the decline of the CPUSA see Maurice Isserman, If I Had A Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

96. ICFTU: Report of Third World Congress 1953, p. 323, cited by Jeffrey Harrod, Trade Union Foreign Policy: A Study of British and American Trade Union Activities in Jamaica. (U.K.: Macmillan) 1978 p.123.

97. See J. Windmuller, "The Foreign Policy Conflict in American Labor," Political Science Quarterly 82 2 (June 1967) p.214.

98. ORIT/ICFTU Declaration 1967 in AIFLD Report June-July 1967.

99. Jeffrey Harrod says the ICFTU's European leaders tried to exert influence, but met too much resistance from the AFL-CIO, see Harrod pp. 292-293.

100. The theme of organised labour's need to promote capitalist investment and to prevent class conflict is recurrent in the speeches of ORIT leaders. For example, see Julio Cruzado Zavala, Gen. Sec Peruvian CTP, in Report of the IVth Western Hemisphere Labor Economics Conference, ORIT/AFL-CIO/AIFLD "Transfer of Capital, Technology, and Employment" Lima, Peru, Nov. 24-26, 1978.

101. H.A. Spalding "U.S. and Latin American Labor," Latin American Perspectives Issue 8, (Winter 1986) 3 1 pp. 50-51.

102. For a discussion of the Alliance For Progress, see Jerome Levinson and Juan de Onis, The Alliance That Lost Its Way, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).

103. See Bruce H. Miller, "The Political Role of Labor in Developing Countries," Brookings Report, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institute, 1963, p.5 Legislation cited by Jonathan Feldman, "U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Latin American Labor: AIFLD, Central America, and Beyond," Draft Report, Committee On Hemispheric Affairs, Washington, D.C. 1985, pp. 2-4, Unpublished.

104. Weinrub and Bollinger, op. cit. p.13.

105. See Arnold Zack, Labor Training in Developing Countries: A Challenge to Responsible Democracy (New York: Praeger, 1964). See also George C. Lodge, Spearheads for Democracy: Labor in the Developing Countries (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Harper and Row, 1962)

106. Serafino Romualdi, Presidents and Peons: Recollections of a Labor Ambassador in Latin America. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967) p. 418.

107. ibid. pp. 182-190.

108. This accusation has been made by left writers, such as J. Dunkerley and C. Whitehouse, in Unity is Strength: Trade Unions in Latin America, A Case For Solidarity (London: Latin American Bureau, 1979) pp. 85-88. Spalding, however, maintains that supporters of the regime won control of the CTC in union elections and enjoyed clear majority support among the Cuban working class. H.A. Spalding, Jr. Organized Labor....op. cit. pp. 232-245.

109. Romualdi, op. cit. pp. 228-230.

110. ibid. p.82

111. Morton H. Halperin, a former senior staff member of the National Security Council, has stated: "Starting in the late 1940's, the CIA has worked extremely closely with..much of the American labor movement to build strong anti-Communist unions and to destroy the effectiveness of leftist unions." See M.H. Halperin, et al., The Lawless State, The Crimes of the U.S. Intelligence Agencies (New York: Penguin Books, 1978) p.48. Cited by Galvin, op. cit. p.18

112. Radosh, op. cit. p.433. For more information on the issue of the AFL-CIO and the CIA see Braden, op. cit.;

Philip Agee, Inside the Company (New York, Stonehill 1975) which refers to Irving Brown as "the principle CIA agent for control of the ICFTU"; Sidney Lens, "Partners: Labor and the CIA" The Progressive, February 1975; Dan Kurzman, "Lovestone's Cold War: The AFL-CIO Has Its Own CIA" New Republic, June 25, 1966; Victor Reuther, The Brothers Reuther (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976) For a CPUSA account see George Morris, CIA and American Labor (New York: International Publishers, 1967) For a useful summary of these and other sources see H.A. Spalding's articles cited below, and Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, AIFLD in Central America: Agents As Organizers, (Albuquerque, NM: Resourse Centre, 1986).

113. See, for example, Tom Barry, Beth Wood, and Deb Preusch, Dollars and Dictators: A Guide to Central America, (New York: Grove Press, 1983).

114. AIFLD, Annual Progress Report, 1985.

115. AIFLD, Annual Progress Report, 1962-86.

116. Agee, op. cit. p.407. Agee has claimed that, while the training programs in any given country "will nominally and administratively be controlled by AIFLD in Washington, it is planned that as many as possible will be headed by salaried CIA agents with operational control exercised by the (CIA) station." Ibid.

117. Barry and Preusch in Agents... offer an index of AIFLD courses which helps convey their ideological character. These include: Totalitarian Ideologies; Democratic Theory; Democracy and Development; Recognition and Analysis of Extremist Propaganda; Safeguarding and Defending Meetings, Parades and Demonstrations From Extremist Attacks; and Recognition of and Defense Against Infiltration and Front Organizations. T. Barry & D. Preusch, op. cit. p.13.

118. AIFLD Labor Studies Program at the Geroge Meany Center, Labor Education Manual Number 4, "Political Aspects of Development." February 1980, Ch.6.

119. AIFLD Labor Studies Program at the George Meany Center, Labor Education Manual Mo.8, "Democracy and Development." Undated.

120. Cited by T. Barry and D. Preusch, op. cit. p.13.

121. William Bollinger, The AFL-CIO in Latin America (pamphlet) Interamerican Research Center, Los Angeles, 1984. p.24.

122. H.A. Spalding, Jr., Organized Labor...op. cit. p.264 See also, Cheddi Jagan, The West on Trial: the Fight for Guyana's Freedom (Berlin, Seven Seas Pubs., 1975)

123. State Department memo. cited by Richard J. Barnett, Intervention and Revolution (London: McMillan & Kee, 1980) p.239.

124. ibid. pp.239-240.

125. ibid. p.241.

126 ibid. Joseph C. Goulden's biography of AFSCME President Jerry Wurf records how Wurf, before becoming President, was aware of CIA activity in the union. From mid-1957, writes Goulden, AFSCME "acted as a conduit for $878,000 in CIA funds passed to foreign public employee unions, chiefly in Latin America." Goulden records how Wurf noticed "some real cloak and dagger types" in AFSCME's International Affairs Department. See Joseph C. Goulden, Jerry Wurf: Labor's Last Angry Man (New York: Atheneum, 1982) pp.102-103.

127. Barnett, op. cit. pp.242-243.

128. U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Sub-Committee on American Republic Affairs, "Survey of the Alliance For Progress, Labor Politics and Program" 90th Cong., 2nd sess., July 15, 1968, p.14.

129. Romualdi, op. cit p286.

130. H.A. Spalding, "U.S. Labour Intervention in Latin America: The Case of the American Institute For Free Labor Development (AIFLD)," Labour, Capital and Society 17 2 (November 1984) pp.137-172. On Brazil, pp.146-147.

131. See Susan Bodenheimer, "The AFL-CIO in Latin America: The Dominican Republic, A Case Study." Viet Report (Sept.-Oct. 1967) and Susanne Jonas, "Trade Union Imperialism in the Dominican Republic" NACLA Report on the Americas 9 3 (April 1975) pp. 16-28. See also Spalding, "U.S. Labour Intervention..." op. cit. pp.148-149; Dunkerley & Whitehouse, op. cit. pp. 89-90 & Michael J. Sussman, AIFLD: U.S. Trojan Horse in Latin America and the Caribbean Washington D.C., Epica, July 1983, pp.14-15.

132. See D. Thompson and R. Larson, op. cit. pp.44-49.

133. Cited ibid. pp.45-46.

134. See AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News, September 1974.

135. Roy Godson, "American Labor's Continuing Involvement in World Affairs," Orbis XIX 1 (Spring 1975) pp.93-117.

136. Romualdi, op. cit. pp.289-290.

137. AFL-CIO Convention resolution, 1965. Cited by Romualdi, op. cit. p.291.

138. See R.W. Cox, "Labor and Hegemony: A Reply," op. cit. pp.174-175.

139. Galvin, op. cit.

140. Levenstein, op. cit. Ch. 12.

141. ICFTU, List of Affiliated Organizations (May 13, 1987) Compiled by ICFTU Brussels, released to author by the ICFTU's office at the United Nations, New York City, November 1987.

142. Harrod, op. cit pp. 297-299.

143. AFL-CIO Executive Council, February, 1964.

144. Carlos Diaz, "AIFLD Loses Its Grip," in Argentina: In The Hour Of The Furnaces (New York: NACLA, 1975) pp. 56-77. Comment on the nature of the trade union bureaucracy in Latin America and its essentially constraining role is also to be found in Juan Carlos Torre, "The Meaning of Current Workers' Struggles," Latin American Perspectives 1 3 (Fall 1974) pp. 73-81.

145. Timothy Fox Harding, The Political History of Organized Labor in Brazil PhD, Stanford University, March 1973.

146. See Charles Bergquist, Labor in Latin America: Comparative Essays on Chile, Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986).

147. Troncoso and Burnett, op. cit. p.134.

148. Marc Edelman notes how the CPUSA under the leadership of Earl Browder exerted strong influence over the Latin American CPs. The wartime alliance, urged Browder, would open up a period of global cooperation between capitalism and communism. "Browder advocated collaboration with progressive capitalists and converted the CPUSA into a `political association,' a step mimicked by a number of Latin American parties which dropped "Communist" from their names." See Marc Edelman, "The Other Super Power: The Soviet Union and Latin America, 1917-1987." NACLA Report on the Americas (Jan.-Feb. 1987) p.17.

149. Harrod, for example, records that, following 1949, "the WFTU..did not make less developed countries as important an issue as did the ICFTU." Harrod, op. cit. p.369 For the WFTU's general discomfort with separate regional organizations, see John P. Windmuller, "International Trade

Union Organizations: Structure, Functions, Limitations," in Soloman Barkin, et. al. (eds) International Labor, (New York: Industrial Relations Research Center, Harper and Row, 1967).

150. For a short discussion on CPUSTAL, see R. Godson, Labor in Soviet Global Strategy (New York: National Security Information Centre, 1984) pp. 49-51.

151. A.P. Coldrick & P. Jones, International Directory of the Trade Union Movement (New York: Facts on File, 1979) p.1037; See also, WFTU, The World Federation of Trade Unions, 1945-85, (Prague CZ: Czechoslovak Trade Unions Publishers, 1985) Author Interview, Sr. Jose Prince U.N. Representative of the social-christian World Confederation of Labor, December 12, 1987; Author Interview, Fred Gaboury, WFTU representative to the U.N., July 16, 1986.

152. Sandor Gaspar, "WFTU in Latin America", World Marxist Review, April, 1982; Coldrick and Jones, op. cit. p.1037.

153. The broad thrust of this policy was expressed by Che Guevara in his speech, "Vietnam and the World Struggle for Freedom: Message to the Tricontinental." (April 16, 1967) See Ernesto Che Guevara, Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution: Writings and Speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara, (Sydney: Pathfinder, Pacific & Asian, 1987).

154. Miles Galvin has written that, for example, the Puerto Rican labour movement drew close to the AFL during the time of Gompers, a relationship that was forged by "a calculation of the relative feasibility of the alternative of social opposition to..the capitalist system in the context of the objective situation prevailing at the time, including especially the overwhelming capacity of the ruling regime for repression." Miles Galvin, "The Early Development of Organized Labour in Puerto Rico," Latin American Perspectives Summer, 1986. pp. 46-64.

155. This point is made by several writers. For a useful discussion on this question see Julio Godio, Sindicalismo y politica n America Latina (Caracas: Instituto Latinamericano de Investigaciones Sociales, 1983) pp. 254-278.

156. A recent study of working class politics in Mexico and Venezuela by Charles Davis underscores the Left's general difficulty. "Workers in both countries," says Davis, "are not likely to convert discontent into leftist voting since the left does not provide an alternative th hegemonic parties." See Charles L. Davis, Working Class Mobilization and Political Control: Venezuela and Mexico (University Press of Kentucky, 1989).

CHAPTER 2

THE AFL-CIO IN EL SALVADOR 1965-1983: REFORMS AMIDST REPRESSION

The AFL-CIO's involvement in El Salvador began in earnest during the mid-1960s. As with several other Latin American countries, the objective was to work with the U.S. Embassy to establish moderate trade unions that would seek to achieve legitimate recognition within the institutional constraints imposed by a dictatorial or "bureaucratic-authoritarian" regime. In order to achieve even modest political and industrial space these unions attempted to persuade the regime of the need for gradual reforms to facilitate economic development and, above all, to undercut the appeal of revolutionary alternatives. As the preceding chapter illustrated, this pattern of intervention contrasted markedly from that established in the case of radical-reformist regimes like that of Allende's Chile and Jagan's Guyana. In the case of regimes of the left, a qualitatively different set of methods were employed, including successful or attempted mobilisations of key sections of workers, making them a force for economic and political destabilisation and, without exception, de facto

vehicles of U.S. foreign policy.

In 1948 Serafino Romualdi (a future director of AIFLD) praised the reformist coup in El Salvador conducted by "Young military officers (who) set their mind and enthusiasm to make El Salvador into a modern, developing, country, with constitutional guarantees for all citizens..and a favorable climate for the investment of domestic and foreign capital." [1] Romualdi recalled the arrival of U.S. Ambassador Robert C. Hill in El Salvador in 1954. Romualdi, Hill, and then President of El Salvador, Osorio, met at the Presidential Palace. Osorio remarked, "The Ambassador of the workers and the Ambassador of the government. Que Bueno!" [2] Thirty-one years later, in 1979, AIFLD praised another reformist coup by young military officers in El Salvador, viewing the development as an opportunity to rally the moderate unions and the U.S. Government behind the reformist current in the armed forces which supported the Christian Democratic Party.

AIFLD's Involvement: 1965-1979.

In the period between the two coups, AIFLD played a significant role in providing resources and political support to campesino organisations. The decision to focus on the peasantry and agricultural wage-earners emerged from two pivotal considerations. Firstly, power in El Salvador rested with the oligarchy and their supporters who exerted hegemony within the armed forces. Fewer than 2% of the population

controlled nearly all fertile soil and some 60% of all the land. [3] AIFLD took its brief from the liberal interventionist aspects of the Alliance For Progress which acknowledged that, in many regions and countries of Latin America, land reform was essential to break the preponderant political and economic strength of the oligarchy in order to politically steer the rural areas away from revolutionary solutions to the problem of landlessness. In 1932 the Salvadoran military brutally suppressed an attempted rural insurrection which claimed the lives of an estimated 30,000 people, an event which is constantly referred to by the left both as a source of inspiration and as a reason for caution. The Matanza (massacre) is also remembered affectionately by sections of the right, who regard physical extermination as the only effective method in dealing with the "subversives." [4]

The Cuban revolution revived the spectre of peasant uprisings throughout the sub-continent. For U.S. policy makers the prospect of several "Cubas" convulsing Latin America, aligning themselves with the Soviet Union, and leading to the confiscation of U.S.-owned companies and operations, required urgent preventative action. Where the threat from the left was imminent, defence of the threatened regime was essential through military aid or intervention. In El Salvador the urban left was relatively weak and, for the moment, the trade unions operated under the hegemony of a Communist Party (Partido Comunista de El Salvador -PCES)

schooled in the Popular Front tradition of electoral politics and support for a purportedly progressive indigenous bourgeoisie. While this policy prevailed the trade unions in the urban sector lacked a leadership possessing a clear revolutionary objective. Thus AIFLD could concentrate its work among the rural workforce and landless peasantry. It is perhaps ironic that the cautious tactics of the PCES and the urban unions following its lead, based on the belief that the working class was too small and weak to lead a revolutionary challenge for power, released AIFLD to focus on the rural areas in order to steer the peasantry away from "communist" alternatives.

The Alliance For Progress's insistence on land reform was resisted by the Salvadoran oligarchy. [5] Nevertheless, AIFLD began training campesino leaders in November 1965 and in 1967 training seminars were conducted in conjunction with the Christian Democratic Party (Partido Cristiana Democratica -PDC). In 1968, 4,000 commune members were brought together to form the Salvadoran Communal Union (Union Comunal Salvadorena -UCS), an organisation that would play a highly significant role in the tumultuous period following the reformist coup of 1979. In 1970-72 AIFLD signed U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) contracts worth over $400,000. [6] During this period the UCS emerged as a legitimate campesino union with a social base now large enough to be considered threatening to the oligarchy. Despite their cautious, non-confrontational methods, the "creeping

reformism" of the UCS prompted the regime of Colonel Aturo Molina to expel AIFLD from El Salvador. [7]

AIFLD continued to provide financial support for the UCS during their period of exile. In June 1974 several unions, including the UCS (who now had a membership approaching 70,000) and the Federation of Construction, Transportation, and Related Industries (Federacion de Sindicatos de la Industria de la Construccion, Transporte y Similares - FESINCONSTRANS) called for AIFLD's readmission to El Salvador. [8] Other campesino groups not associated with AIFLD also organised during this period, assisted by Catholic priests. These organisations reflected a mix of radical ideologies and thus suffered violent repression at the hands of a rural vigilante group Nationalist Democratic Organisation (Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista -ORDEN) which was linked to the Ministry of Defence and controlled by retired and active military officers. [10]

The Radicalization of the Urban Unions.

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of several sizeable left unions in the urban sector which were in part an expression of dissatisfaction with the electoral reformism of the PCES and the trade unions following its political lead. One federation, The National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (Federacion Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadorenos -FENASTRAS), was formed in 1972 and by the end of the decade was the

largest collection of industrial unions with a base among textile and hydroelectrical workers in particular. [11] FENASTRAS made an alliance with other left unions and federations to form the United Confederation of Workers (Confederacion Unitaria de Trabajadores Salvadorenos- CUTS). The Left in El Salvador had shown serious divisions following the collapse of the CPES's electoral strategy, which urged support for Guillermo Ungo, a social democrat, and Napoleon Duarte, a Christian Democrat, in the elections for president and vice-president in February 1972. The Salvadoran General Election Board announced Ungo-Duarte the victor over Colonal Molina, the candidate of the right-wing National Conciliation Party (Partido de Conciliacion Nacional -PCN). Following a news blackout lasting three days the Board changed its decision and awarded victory to Molina. [12] The blatant doctoring of the election results in 1972 led many who sought social change to conclude that armed struggle similar to that waged in Cuba and Vietnam remained the only realistic option in El Salvador. It is uncertain whether the left unions dissatisfied with the PCES viewed themselves as auxiliaries to the armed struggle - an "urban front" paving the way for insurrection - or envisaged themselves in a more central role. At this stage it is appears likely that the left unions viewed themselves as a key component of the "popular sector", especially as the guerilla organisations formed in this period were small and ideologically divided. At the height of the repression of 1980-83 the situation would change dramatically.

The urban left unions were crushed, with many of their leaders killed. Those who survived frequently decided to take up arms in a united guerilla struggle; therefore the gravitational centre of the political conflict in El Salvador became the war of the guerillas against the military. However, in the interim the PCES, despite its loss of influence, remained in the electoral alliance with the social democrats until the late 1970s. [13]

The PCES lost further influence in the labour movement with the emergence of the Christian Democratic left and various "new left" currents in the unions. Groups such as the United Popular Action Front (Frente de Accion Popular Unida -FAPU) established a base in FENASTRAS, and the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (Bloque Revolucionario Popular -BPR) secured a base in the National Association of Salvadoran Teachers (Asociacion Nacional de Educadores Salvadorenos -ANDES) and led a rash of strikes in the mid-1970s. [14] Other significant revolutionary groups were the People's Revolutionary Army (Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo -ERP) and the National Resistance (Resistencia Nacional -RN) Earlier, the PCES itself split when a faction left to form the Popular Liberation Forces (Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion -FPL) Meanwhile, the reformist alliance fought elections in 1977, the results of which were also distorted by fraud. Victory was again awarded to the PCN's candidate, General Romero. [15]

The 1970s was also a decade when the right grew in strength. In 1968 the Salvadoran government formed ORDEN, a rural organisation which served as an auxiliary to the armed forces. ORDEN's membership, estimated as high as 100,000, including 10,000 under arms, involved themselves in identifying "subversives" such as those who criticised the oligarchy, the military, or the U.S. [16] ORDEN posed a constant threat even to the moderate unions in the countryside. The 1970s also marked the emergence of the death squads linked to the armed forces and the oligarchy, which provided a base for the right-wing National Republican Alliance (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista -ARENA) party formed in 1981.

The Coup of 1979: AIFLD and the Land Reform.

By 1979, nearly two decades after the founding of the Alliance For Progress, the oligarchy remained the dominant political force in El Salvador and significant land reform had still not been achieved despite agrarian reform laws and schemes introduced under the Molina regime. [17] Repression increased during the Romero period 1977-79; in one incident the security forces opened fire on a demonstration called to protest the electoral fraud, killing almost 100 people. [18] Following pressure from the U.S. Embassy the Salvadoran government permitted AIFLD to re-enter El Salvador just prior to the reformist coup which ousted Romero and days before the

fall of Somoza in Nicaragua. [19] The coup was instigated by moderate military officers who feared the regime's intransigence would lead to its downfall; the Sandinista victory had inspired a certain euphoria in El Salvador which triggered a wave of left-led strikes and mass demonstrations. [20]

The Carter Administration embraced (some say encouraged) the coup in order to pre-empt revolutionary change and to distance itself from the repressive nature of Romero's government. [21] The civilian-military junta, formed October 18, 1979, contained several reformists, including the leading social democrat, Guillermo Ungo, the leader of the centre-left National Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario -MNR). The cabinet, selected later, was also reformist and included Ruben Zamora, a progressive Christian Democrat. Ungo and Zamora would emerge as significant figures in the impending conflict within U.S. trade unions over El Salvador.

Despite the reformist character of the junta the repression intensified as the left unions and the broader popular movement pressed for land reform, higher wages, and price controls. Some 86 people were killed when the armed forces fired on one demonstration. Amnesty International reported the violent suppression of strikes and occupations in the period immediately before and after AIFLD's re-entry into El Salvador. "Security forces acted with the same brutality as those under Romero," said AI; "Within a week the

new government was held responsible for more than 100 killings of demonstrators and striking workers who had been occupying farms and factories." [22] Civilian members of the first junta, including Ungo, resigned January 3, 1980, as the killings spread. They declared that real power was being exercised by several military commanders. Zamora remained in the junta until early March when he too resigned. [23]

A second junta was quickly formed, again encouraged by the U.S. Embassy, with the participation of mainstream Christian Democrats. Meanwhile, the various left currents called for a mass demonstration on January 22. The marchers were machine gunned and as a result 65 were reported killed and 250 wounded. The Carter Administration prepared a major package of military aid to the junta, arguing that the aid would bolster the reform program. With the repression intensifying, leading Christian Democrats resigned, protesting they were being used as a cover for military repression. The Christian Democrats who remained co-opted Jose Napoleon Duarte into the "third" junta, thus sustaining its reformist wing. [24]

The agrarian reform announced in March 1980 was technically assisted by AIFLD, which worked closely with the UCS and the government's Agrarian Reform Institute (ISTA). [25] Their joint objective was to implement a far-reaching land reform in three distinct phases. Phase I planned to expropriate 238 estates with more than 500 hectares each, approximately 15% of all agricultural land. Phase II promised

to expropriate approximately 1,750 farms between 150 and 500 hectares, approximately 23% of agricultural land and, additionally, two thirds of coffee production which constituted the most significant sector of Salvadoran agriculture and the power-base of the oligarchy. Phase III became known as the Land-to-the-tiller program (LTTT - a phrase used by Lenin) allowing land ceded by the large landowners to be handed over to medium-sized farmers, tenants and sharecroppers. [26] Fifteen years of direct or arms-length AIFLD involvement had brought no significant land re-distribution, but it had sustained the UCS as a campesino organisation with a legitimate mass base. AIFLD and the UCS were now poised to pursue a graduated land reform to weaken the power of the oligarchy and to dampen the appeal of the guerilla groups in a situation of deepening polarization and escalating political violence. [27]

The land reform was welcomed by the U.S. Congress as a way to dismantle the power of the oligarchy, and thus save El Salvador from the increasingly armed left. AIFLD moved into two floors of the Sheraton hotel working with Roy Prosterman, a law professor at the University of Washington who was formerly associated with a parallel agrarian reform program in Vietnam designed to "turn the tables on the Vietcong" by providing land to the peasantry as a means of preserving the existing regime. [28] AIFLD reportedly developed an agrarian reform decree which in early 1980 was approved by the Salvadoran military and modelled on Prosterman's LTTT

"pacification" model. [29]

Several accounts have described the reform as a cover for repression in the countryside, in which AIFLD by attempting to legitimize and implement the reform, was a de facto accomplice. [30] The armed forces, purportedly sent into the rural areas to occupy plantations intended for expropriation under the reform, unleashed a wave of repression against the left campesino unions and their sympathisers. [31] In his statement of resignation from the junta in March 1980 the Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Jorge Alberto Villacorta, denounced the Treasury Police, the National Guard, and civilians in ORDEN for murdering large numbers of peasants who had received land titles under the reform and technicians from ISTA and Ministry of Agriculture working with the reform program. [32]

On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated while administering a memorial mass. Romero had criticised the land reform and, one day earlier, appealed to the army to cease its repression of the people. At the Archbishop's funeral 22 were killed. The next day the Democratic Revolutionary Front (Frente Democratico Revolucionario -FDR) was formed, made up of five left organisations, Ungo's social democratic formation (MNR), and Ruben Zamora's dissident Christian Democrats. The left trade unions were in the forefront of the FDR and included FENASTRAS, the hospital workers (Sindicato de Trabajadores del ISSS -STISSS), the teachers union (ANDES) and several other

important labour organisations. [33]

By May political assassinations reached hundreds per month in both urban and rural sectors as the death squads roamed with impunity. In the cities the leadership of the left unions was being exterminated; for example, the teachers union ANDES suffered 90 assassinations in the first nine months of 1980. [34] In the countryside the AIFLD-supported UCS also suffered attacks. On June 5 UCS leaders in eight regions of El Salvador withdrew their support for the reform following the murders of 12 UCS members by the National Guard. This ironically coincided with the publication of an article in the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union News by Prosterman which praised the achievements of the land reform. The AIFLD Report of March-April 1980 was quite candid about the role played by the UCS: the organization had been "pivotal" to the land reform process. Moreover, according to AIFLD, "With most of the campesino sector in El Salvador unorganized or radicalized by leftist extremists, the Junta was desperate to identify a moderate, democratic small farmer organization to serve as the vehicle for the implementation of the reform. The UCS, with strong popular support in the countryside...provided the solution." [35]

On June 25 the left-wing groups called a two-day general strike which mobilized the whole popular sector, including what some observers judged to be 90% of the unions. [36] On June 27 troops took over the national university, killing 16 students. A second general strike, called in August, failed

in the face of military and legal intimidation from the regime. This period constituted a turning point for the left: strikes and demonstrations had received enormous support, but, unlike in Nicaragua, the leadership was divided or uncertain as to how popular mobilization and armed insurrection might be coordinated to deliver a decisive blow to the regime. A leader of the Salvadoran left later commented that the radical trade unions stood in the forefront of an opposition movement which, he claimed, carried with it the potential to seize power. He declared, "The revolutionary movement at that time had the capacity to paralyse the country without any necessity of resorting to military action. Ninety per cent of the trade union organisations (organismos gremiales) of the working class and the employees were following their instructions." [37] Accurate or not, this statement nevertheless conveys how the Salvadoran labour movement was located at the centre of a struggle of revolutionary proportions which compelled the regime to resort to the most brutal measures to arrest its momentum.

The Popular Democratic Unity (UPD).

As the tide turned against the left AIFLD and the moderate unions became more visible. In September 1980 AIFLD brought together the UCS, the construction and transport federation FESINCONSTRANS, and other moderate unions to form the Popular Democratic Unity (Unidad Popular Democratica -UPD)

as a counterweight to unions supporting the FDR. The UPD appeared to follow the lead of the Christian Democrats in the junta and was firmly established among beneficiaries of the agrarian reform, but it had still to develop its urban base. [38] AIFLD channeled an estimated $2 million per year of mainly U.S. State Department funds into the UPD until late 1984. As argued in Chapter One, resources of such quantity, enhanced still further by the political support of the U.S. Embassy and the AFL-CIO, assumed considerable political importance, especially in an underdeveloped country with a climate of union repression. In El Salvador during late 1980 this importance was in the process of being reaffirmed. [39]

In November 1980 the various guerilla organisations, having overcome factional differences in May, merged to form the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The component groups were the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the Peoples Revolutionary Army (ERP), the National Resistance (RN), the Communist Party (PCES) - which now acknowledged a need for armed struggle - and the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC). A similar unity was achieved among several of the left unions who formed the Committee for Trade Union Unity (Comite de Unidad Sindical Salvadorena -CUS), which supported the FDR. [40] In the coming years the FDR would act as the political wing of an FDR-FMLN alliance while the FMLN waged an ongoing guerilla war against the Salvadoran armed forces.

In late 1980 the leadership of the FDR were being warmly received in the international arena, particularly by the Socialist International. However, in November following the U.S. presidential election victory of Ronald Reagan, five leaders of the FDR were abducted in San Salvador and murdered. Ungo, then abroad, became president of the FDR and the rest of the FDR leadership went into exile. The junta claimed no responsibility for the deaths and blamed extremist groups. [41] In December the junta reorganised itself with Duarte becoming president and Colonal Abdul Gutierrez, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, becoming vice-president.

The "third" junta of Duarte and Gutierrez received $25 million in economic aid from the U.S. in December as the FMLN intensified its military campaign. Also in December four North American nuns were raped and murdered by the death squads, the news of which triggered opposition from within U.S. religious circles to U.S. aid to or military intervention in El Salvador. The churches in the U.S. had, decades earlier, assisted the consolidation of Cold War ideology inside the labour movement with their own variant of anti-communism. The changing political climate inside the churches, reflected in the growth of anti-interventionism, would impinge on the struggle over Central America in the U.S. labour movement. (See Chapter Ten.)

The Sheraton Murders.

An additional development important to the impending conflict in the U.S. trade unions over Central America occurred on January 4, 1981. Two Americans, Mark Hammer and Mark Pearlman, were assassinated in the coffee shop of the Sheraton International hotel in San Salvador. Both had been working on the agrarian reform program with AIFLD. Rodolfo Viera, head of the Agrarian Reform Institute (ISTA) and the UCS, was also killed. The incident brought the conflict in El Salvador to the attention of a wider section of the U.S. labour movement. It also brought attention, however, to AIFLD. Until this time the activities of the Institute were barely known even by union activists. [42]

The Sheraton incident again aroused suspicions that AIFLD worked closely with the CIA; AIFLD's twenty-year history had been replete with accusations of this nature. Solicitor General Wade McCree, in an appearance before the U.S. Supreme Court ten days after the Sheraton assassinations, commented, "...just recently two Americans have been killed in El Salvador. Apparently they were some kind of undercover persons working under the cover of a labor organization." [43]

The murders themselves were widely attributed to a death squad working for opponents of the land reform within the oligarchy. Viera was one of 92 UCS officials, and innumerable land reform beneficiaries, to perish during 1981 in the oligarchy's resistance to the reform program.

Furthermore, the UCS reported more than 25,000 reform beneficiaries and sharecroppers had suffered eviction from their land by December 1981. [44] Phase II of the land reform program - the most critical in that it would have redistributed a portion of the oligarchy's coffee-growing lands - was thus effectively blocked by the oligarchy from the beginning. [45]

The repression of the UCS and the murder of Hammer and Perlman demonstrated the extent to which the oligarchy would resist the land reform. It also confirmed that the UCS constituted a threat to the oligarchy in that it aroused the hopes of thousands of land-hungry campesinos. If a limited reform was designed to pacify the peasantry it had the opposite effect on the landowning class. As mentioned above, the scarcity of land in El Salvador ensured that, whatever AIFLD's intentions, the UCS would at some stage come into conflict with the oligarchy. As one writer commented, "for all their money and influence, AIFLD, the U.S. Embassy and the CIA operatives who collaborated with the two in overseeing the affairs of the UCS were unable to avoid friction with the regime...it (the UCS) never developed into the large and influential 'yellow union' that the AIFLD, USAID and the CIA sought to create." [46]

The AFL-CIO and U.S. Aid to the Junta.

An AFL-CIO Executive Council resolution in February 1981 refused to offer unconditional support for the right-wing government in El Salvador and rejected the notion, attributed to key individuals in the Reagan Administration, that such aid would prevent a communist takeover. Future aid, said the resolution, should be "conditioned on reciprocal actions to bring domestic violence under control and to institute democratic reforms that improve the conditions of the workers." The AFL-CIO also stipulated that the Salvadoran authorities must make genuine efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the Sheraton murders. [47]

The following month William Doherty recited the Executive Council's position before a Congressional committee. Doherty's numerous appearances before Congressional committees deserve attention for at least two reasons. Firstly, as Executive Director of AIFLD, Doherty's statements amounted to the official voice of the AFL-CIO on issues pertaining to Latin America and the Caribbean before Congressional circles. Secondly, Doherty invariably purported to be speaking not just for the AFL-CIO but also on behalf of the "democratic" trade union movement active in the country under discussion, thus according a single AIFLD official a dual representational monopoly. Careful scrutiny of Doherty's testimonies reveal a formal loyalty both to AFL-CIO Executive Council statements and statements made by leaders of the trade union sector in

the country being discussed. However, these were frequently accompanied by comments which arguably depart from both the spirit and the letter of those positions.

Doherty's remarks on the question of aid to El Salvador are a case in point. "Since we are not military men," said Doherty, "we do not presume to advise this Committee regarding the necessity for military aid. However, as Americans, we are deeply concerned with the evidence compiled by the State Department which indicates that the guerilla movement, dedicated to the overthrow of the reform-minded centrist junta, is being supplied with arms by enemies of our democratic way of life." [48] It does not seem contentious to suggest that Doherty's comments were intended to convince Congressional representatives that military aid was indeed needed to meet the communist threat, and they partially or entirely negated the significance of the terms for such aid laid down by the AFL-CIO.

Doherty again drifted from his brief when on another occasion he discussed the repression of the UCS. Doherty described the agrarian reform as under attack from "the oligarchy and their allies on the right and the Marxist-Leninist left." However, of the 184 deaths of reform beneficiaries and personnel documented by the UCS and presented to the Congressional sub-committee by Doherty, none were attributed to the guerillas or their supporters. AIFLD's leading spokesperson was prepared to depart from the position expressed by the AFL-CIO's Salvadoran affiliates in order to

depict the FMLN as a force inflicting the same volume of terror on the unarmed Salvadoran population as the death squads and their supporters inside the military, a departure which again effectively illustrated the need for military aid to defeat the guerillas. [49]

The March 1982 Elections.

The March 1982 Legislative Assembly elections in El Salvador were interpreted as a major public rejection of the military strategy of the FMLN. Some 1.5 million people reportedly voted from a total of eligible voters believed to be around 2.2 million. The University of Central America, however, claimed that no more than 1 million voted and that the voting figures were inflated to discredit the FMLN. [50] The elections and the purportedly high level of participation received loud applause from the U.S. Government, the U.S. media, the AIFLD-supported UPD and the AFL-CIO who sent a team of observers who testified to the honesty of the electoral process.

The AFL-CIO was the only foreign union federation to send such a delegation; Latin American and European federations declined the invitation. [51] The four-person team consisted of three AIFLD officials and Eugenia Kemble, special assistant to AFT president Albert Shanker, a leading supporter of AIFLD. Doherty testified to the Congressional Subcommittee on Foreign Operations that 85% of those eligible

cast their vote, "in a display of bravery and civic pride that captured the hearts of true democrats everywhere in the world." The AIFLD official, in common with the Reagan Administration's statements concerning the elections, neglected to inform the Committee that voting for the elections was compulsory. Doherty also commented, "We all sought free elections as a sign that El Salvador was moving toward a democratic system of government. This was the AFL-CIO's goal, as it was also the goal of U.S. foreign policy." [52]

The elections achieved a number of things for the Reagan Administration. Firstly, Congress had been reluctant to approve military aid to El Salvador - the horrifying nature of the repression was now international news. The elections helped dispel concern, in Congress and beyond, that the U.S. was intervening to maintain a bloody military regime at war with its own people. Secondly, the elections helped delegitimize the left in El Salvador in the eyes of Congress. The Administration claimed that the guerillas, by rejecting invitations to participate in the elections, were confirming their totalitarian pedigree by refusing to test their degree of support in open democratic contest. The fact that the social democratic and left Christian democratic political formations (now in the FDR) had once pursued the peaceful option, for which they were brutally repressed by the armed right, was conveniently forgotten. Thirdly, the creation of a "democratic opening" and the perceived motives of the

guerillas for avoiding the elections dissolved Congressional resistance to military aid to El Salvador. [53] In September 1981 the Senate stipulated that the President provide a twice-annual certification of El Salvador's progress toward political reforms and human rights. [54]

The plans for elections had been a major factor in the Presidential certification of aid in late January 1981, despite the announcement by the human rights group Americas Watch two days prior to the certification that 3,581 political assassinations had occurred in El Salvador in the five months leading to the date of certification. [55] Moreover, the elections virtually ensured certification for the foreseeable future. In February 1982 an executive order from President Reagan released $55 million in defence equipment for El Salvador. From the outbreak of the civil war until 1985 the U.S. would provide $1.7 billion to the Government, Central Bank and armed forces of El Salvador. This allowed the Salvadoran Army and security forces to grow from 12,000 to 42,000 in the period 1980-84, when the forces of the FMLN also grew from 2-3,000 to 9-11,000. [56]

The UPD and the "Democratic Opening".

The election delivered 24 Assembly seats to Duarte's Christian Democrats (40% of the vote), 18 to the right-wing ARENA party, 14 to the PCN, and 3 to the minor parties. In April ARENA and the PCN used their combined majority to take

control of the Constituent Assembly and almost immediately implemented measures to derail the land reform. Phase II, which had never actually commenced, was formally abandoned, and the land scheduled to be distributed under Phase III of the "Land-to-the-tiller" program was made exempt from the reform. These measures were followed by the forced eviction of recipients from their newly acquired land. The UCS and the UPD put the number of evictions at 12,000. [57]

In May UPD leaders came to Washington to consult with AFL-CIO officials and urge Congress to insist that military and economic aid to El Salvador would be cut if the land reform program was not restarted. From that moment the Salvadoran army reportedly began to reinstall evicted land reform beneficiaries to their assigned plots. In August Doherty appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee accompanied by four UPD leaders. The AFL-CIO and AIFLD, said Doherty, had concluded that "undeniable progress" had been made in all areas upon which U.S. aid was conditional, with only the land reform being problematical. Human rights, continued Doherty, had improved and efforts had been made to bring to justice those responsible for the Sheraton murders. The armed forces were pursuing reform and there had been free elections. [58] However, in another such appearance five months later Doherty acknowledged that the land reform was facing a crisis although in late 1982 the UCS had successively encouraged an increased number of campesinos to file applications for land. By resisting the land reform, Doherty

warned, "the retrograde right" were serving "the interests of the Marxist-Leninist left." Doherty suggested that the U.S. Government could improve the situation by providing fiscal compensation to landlords whose land was scheduled for redistribution. [59]

During the electoral campaign of March 1982 the UPD reportedly employed 400 organisers, paid by AIFLD, to encourage the rural population to vote for the Christian Democrats. The leaders of the moderate unions, having rejected armed struggle, in effect had little option but to support Duarte in the hope that the right might eventually be brought under control. ARENA now held several important government ministries, including the agrarian reform institute, ISTA. Ideological differences aside, the prospects of a temporary or tactical alliance between the centre unions around the UPD and the unions associated with the FDR had been precluded by the massive repression of the latter. The UPD, however, had the political support of the U.S. Embassy and considerable resources made available by AIFLD. Perhaps because of this support the UPD pressed its own set of demands on the new government and called for human rights violators to be punished, UPD representation in the government, dialogue with the FDR-FMLN and thoroughgoing economic and political reforms. [60]

In February and March 1983 the UPD, encouraged by AIFLD, mobilized 10,000 on the streets to support reformists in the Constituent Assembly in their bid to prevent ARENA's annulment

of the LTTT Phase III of the agrarian reform. The Assembly had fallen under the control of ARENA-PCN following the March 1982 elections, but decisions to halt the land reform had been reversed by the reformists in the Assembly who argued, inter alia, that the reform was a pragmatic move to ensure continuing U.S. aid. PCN defectors from the alliance with ARENA altered the balance of power in the Assembly towards the Christian Democrats. [61] The UCS mobilization demonstrated that the UPD and AIFLD's objective of establishing moderate unions as a counterweight to the right (and the unions close to the FDR) would be pursued by occasional displays of rank and file support for reforms - and not just by way of a union leadership clique seeking favours from, or participation in, government ministries. [62]

By mid-1982 the level of assassinations had reportedly waned although the army and the death squads continued to commit fatal atrocities at the rate of 200-300 per month. Americas Watch considered the fall in the level of murders reflected the finite number of individuals targeted for repression in El Salvador: "It would be the height of cynicism," it noted, "to interpret such a decline (in political murders) as an indication that the government of El Salvador has become more respectful of human rights." [63] The left federation FENASTRAS recorded 8,329 union members had been murdered, abducted, disappeared or wounded from 1979 through 1981. [64] Unselective annihilation of campesinos by the armed forces continued into 1983; in one incident 74 were

killed in Sonsonate, 18 of whom were members of the UPD-affiliated National Association of Salvadoran Indians (Asociacion Nacional Indigena Salvadorena -ANIS). Doherty told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in August that such atrocities could not continue; "the Salvadoran army is needed to defeat the guerillas...the U.S. Government must pressure the army to clean up its act." [65]

In December 1983 U.S. Vice-President Bush obliged Doherty and those sharing this view. In El Salvador Bush (using the same phraseology) informed leaders of the Salvadoran armed forces that the death squads must be controlled. Failure to do so would result in the Administration withdrawing its support for the regime. [66]

Trade union activity in El Salvador remained subdued by physical repression and legal constraints. The left unions, operating in a clandestine or semi-clandestine fashion, were largely limited to public pronouncements against repression and in support of trade union unity. In late 1982 the left unions reformed under the new name of Labour Unity Movement of El Salvador (Movimiento Unitario Sindicalista y Gremail de El Salvador -MUSYGES) which replaced the decimated CUS coalition constructed by the left unions in the pre-revolutionary situation that existed in early 1980. [67] MUSYGES immediately began its short life with an attempt to unify the Salvadoran labour movement, an initiative rejected by the UPD because of MUSYGES' purported ties to the "subversive-terrorist" FMLN. [68]

Conclusion.

By late 1983 the magnitude of one of the most bloody repressions in postwar history, which had decimated the active layers of the left unions and seriously harmed the unions of the centre, had become clear. As one source expressed it: "The statistics are numbing. Between October 1979 and late 1983...Tutela Legal tabulated more than 38,000 murders of civilian noncombatants by government security forces and paramilitary groups associated with them. When the violence peaked, as in early 1981, 300 to 500 were killed each week; during times of relative "quiet", as in the last three months of 1983, the murders continued at a rate of 120 a week." [69]

The role of the AFL-CIO in El Salvador, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Department of State, was in all probability partially protective of the moderate unions in the UPD when the repression was at its height. Moreover, AIFLD's mobilization of the UCS behind the Christian Democrats had probably kept the land reform programme alive and helped persuade Congress to take a stronger position towards the Salvadoran right on the question of military and paramilitary atrocities. Furthermore, AIFLD's direct and indirect influence in El Salvador before the coup of 1979 demonstrated an active and enduring commitment to the reformist agenda advanced by the Alliance For Progress at a time when a similar commitment on the part of U.S. policy makers was noticeably lacking. Put another way, AIFLD engaged itself in the active

struggle for reforms during a period when successive U.S. Administrations were more inclined to develop the civil security forces in El Salvador under a Public Safety Program designed by the CIA, the Green Berets, and the Department of State. The Public Safety Program, according to the testimonies of numerous Salvadoran military officers, was instrumental in building the military and paramilitary apparatus (including the civilian counter-insurgency group ORDEN) to combat "subversion" in El Salvador. This counter-insurgency apparatus was intended to complement the initiatives taken towards reforms: the armed forces would guard against the infiltration of the left, thereby creating a more hygienic atmosphere for political and economic liberalization. [70] U.S. policy in El Salvador, however, had the effect of constructing a military and paramilitary apparatus which violently obstructed the AIFLD-UPD reform objectives. This contradiction in U.S. policy was expressed soon after the inception of the Alliance For Progress by radical commentators Lynd and Hayden: "While American Peace Corpsmen and aid officials apply their Sisphyean labors in the villages, other Americans work among the oligarchs and generals to prevent a radical force from emerging. The reformer falls." [71]

The consequences of this contradiction unfolded dramatically in the period following the coup in 1979. The challenge posed by the left prompted the U.S. Government to abandon Romero in order to encourage and then support the

reformist coup, while simultaneously providing the armed forces with even greater quantities of military hardware and training to defeat the left. While AIFLD openly identified with the reform juntas, the Institute played down the extent and character of the repression against the left and their sympathisers before official AFL-CIO and Congressional gatherings. True, AIFLD protested the considerable repression of the UCS, but falsely directed equal blame to the guerillas on the left and the death squads on the right. The death squads, furthermore, were considered to be a minority "retrograde" faction of the otherwise reform oriented armed forces. In characterising the repression of the UCS in this way, AIFLD, through its principal representative William C. Doherty, both justified arming the Salvadoran military and effectively recommended that the policy continue. While the AFL-CIO's Executive Council called for military aid to be made conditional on the implementation of reforms and an improvement in the human rights situation, AIFLD (echoing the Department of State) assured the Council that progress was indeed being made in all areas under scrutiny, when, in fact, the Salvadoran armed forces continued to exterminate its opponents.

AIFLD had once again been an important actor in the political affairs of a Latin American country. In Doherty's words, the AFL-CIO in El Salvador were playing a role "of vital importance in the development of democracy and, by extention, to the development of pluralistic societies

throughout Central and South America." [72] AIFLD, while openly identifying with the reform objectives of the Department of State, complied, albeit less obviously, with the broader counter-insurgency agenda of the U.S. Government as managed by the U.S. military and the CIA. As the basic contradiction in U.S. policy unfolded in the repression of 1980-83, AIFLD took its political cue from the Department of State by shifting responsibility for the carnage to the political extremes, therefore justifying a greater role for themselves (and the U.S. Government) as supporters of the non-violent centre.

However, the period 1979-83 coincided with mounting criticism of U.S. foreign policy inside the U.S. trade unions. As this criticism became more developed and spawned its own dissident organisational network inside the labour movement, the challenge to AIFLD and the Institute's supporters also intensified. (See Chapter Four) This developing challenge to U.S. policy constituted a significant factor in the revival of the left trade unions in El Salvador, a process which began in early 1984. As U.S. trade union activists and leaders developed their own movement against U.S. intervention they forged independent links with several unions known to support the FDR. The trade union left in El Salvador now began to see the AFL-CIO as an arena where contending forces fought a war of position, when hitherto the Federation had been viewed as a consistent ally of U.S. imperialism.

This thesis returns to the situation in the Salvadoran labour movement in Chapter Five. Meanwhile, Chapter Three will discuss the AFL-CIO's role in Nicaragua in the period preceding and immediately following the Sandinista-led insurrection in July 1979.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Serafino Romualdi, Presidents and Peons: Recollections of a Labor Ambassador in Latin America (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967) Ch.16. p.237. Romualdi noted, "If the totalitarians, Communists and Peronistas, have failed to gain the enduring alliance of the Central American campesinos, it is because they underestimated their natural attachment to freedom, even if in their lack of sophistication the campesinos do not understand or feel freedom's true spiritual values." ibid.

2. ibid. pp. 253-4.

3. James McCarger, El Salvador and Nicaragua: The AFL-CIO Views on the Controversy (Washington, D.C.: Department of International Affairs, AFL-CIO, 1985) p.3.

4. During the repression of 1980-83, death squads displayed a certain fondness for marking the bodies of their victims with "Remember 1932" and similar words and statements which evoked memories of the insurrection. Death squads have been known to call themselves Hernandez Martinez Brigades, after the military leader who led the Matanza. See, Philippe Bourgois, "What U.S. Foreign Policy Faces in Rural El Salvador: An Eyewitness Account," Monthly Review 34 1 (May 1982) p.14

5. Carolyn Forche and Philip Wheaton, History and Motivations of U.S. Involvement in the Control of the Peasant Movement in El Salvador: The Role of AIFLD in the Agrarian Reform Process, 1970-1980. (Washington D.C.: Ecumenical Program for Interamerican Communication and Action [EPICA], 1980) p.3.

6. USAID Project Agreement, AID-ES-26, 1970 & 1972, cited by Wheaton and Forche, op. cit. p.8.

7. Philip Wheaton, Agrarian Reform in El Salvador: A Program of Rural Pacification (Washington, D.C. EPICA Task Force, November, 1980) p.17. AIFLD's expulsion in 1973 is not always attributed to the threat to the oligarchy inherent in

AIFLD-UCS organizing activities, as claimed by the Institute, but to the regimes disapproval at AIFLD's choice for in-country director. AIFLD frequently refer to their expulsion as a means of refuting the allegation made by their left critics that they merely serve the interests of the (in this case) Salvadoran oligarchy. If this were so, they argue, the Molina regime would not have moved to expel them from the country. See Wheaton and Forche, op. cit. pp. 5-8.

8. Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, Agents as Organizers: AIFLD in Central America (Albuquerque, N.M.: Resource Center, 1987) p.23; Wheaton and Forche, op. cit. p.12.

9. William Bollinger, "El Salvador" in Latin American Labor Organizations, eds G. Greenfield and S. L. Maram, (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), Chapter 11, p.315. See also Bollinger, El Salvador's Trade Unions: Problems and Prospects, A Report from San Salvador (Los Angeles: Interamerican Research Center, Sept. 1985)

10. Wheaton and Forche, op. cit. p.11.

11. Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, El Salvador: The Face of Revolution (Boston: South End Press: 1982), p 33; Bollinger "El Salvador," op. cit. p.316.

12. Armstrong and Shenk, op. cit. p.38.

13. ibid. pp.64-67; F. Brodhead and Edward S. Herman, Demonstration Elections: U.S. Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador (Boston: South End Press, 1984) pp. 99-100.

14. Bollinger "El Salvador," op. cit. pp. 316-317.

15. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in El Salvador Organization of American States, 1979 pp.153-156, cited by Brodhead and Herman, op. cit. p.102. For a useful account of the ascendancy of the left during this period, see James Dunkerley, The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in El Salvador (London: Verso, 1985) Second Edition, Ch. Six, pp. 87-102.

16. Brodhead and Herman, op. cit. p.103. "Membership in ORDEN," suggest the authors, "might mean many things: a means of survival; a source of petty favors and privileges..in exchange for identifying subversives; or the power to dominate one's neighbours and settle r personal scores by violence without the danger of arrest and prosecution." ibid.

17. Robert Armstrong, "El Salvador: Why Revolution?" NACLA Report on the Americas, March-April, 1980, p.23.

18. Broadhead and Herman, op. cit. p.102.

19. Forche and Wheaton, op. cit. p.19.

20. For a discussion on the impact of the Sandinista victory on El Salvador during this period, see Dunkerley, op. cit. Ch. Eight, pp. 119-131.

21. Stewart Klepper, "The United States in El Salvador," Covert Action Information Bulletin, April, 1981 pp. 4-21; Armstrong and Shenk, op. cit. p.116.

22. Amnesty International, "Report on El Salvador," Amnesty International Report 1980 (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1980) p.133. Cited by Armstrong & Shenk, op. cit. pp. 120-21.

23. Armstrong & Shenk, op. cit. 130; Kenneth Sharpe and Martin Diskin, "Facing Facts in El Salvador: Reconciliation or War," World Policy Journal (Spring 1984) pp. 517-547.

24. ibid. pp. 132-142.

25. Wheaton and Forche, op. cit. p.33.

26. Central America Historical Institute, (CAHI) "Agrarian Reform in El Salvador and Nicaragua: Pacification or Liberation?" Envio, 3 26 (August 1983) p.46.

27. For further discussion on the proposed land reform, see Dunkerley, op. cit. pp. 97-99.

28. Roy L. Prosterman, "Land Reform in South Vietnam: A Proposal For Turning the Tables on the Vietcong," Cornell Law Review 53 1 (November 1967) pp. 26-44. Prosterman apparently worked for the Marcos government in the Philippines as a land reform consultant. See Covert Action Information Bulletin, April 1981, p.12.

29. Lawrence Z. Simon and James C. Stephens, Jr. El Salvador's Land Reform 1980-81 Impact Audit, Oxfam America Inc., 1981. Oxfam criticized the LTTT program technically as well as politically, LTTT "shows an apparent ignorance of El Salvador's agricultural practices..LTTT locks peasants onto plots that cannot even provide full subsistence...LTTT must be seen as a politically expedient measure..an attempt to generate popular support for a faltering regime." ibid. pp.55-62.

30. Michael J. Sussman, AIFLD: U.S. Trojan Horse in Latin America and the Caribbean (Washington, D.C.: Epica Special Report, July, 1983) p.16. "Under the guise of a purported progressive reform, the result has been the systematic slaughter of thousands of unarmed peasants including women, children and elderly." ibid.

31. Amnesty International 1980, op. cit. p.135;

"Salvadoran Army Steps Up Drive Against Leftists," New York Times, March 12, 1980.

32. The Assistant Minister declared, "From the very first moment of the implementation of the agrarian reform, what we saw was a sharp increase in the official violence against the very peasants who were supposed to be the beneficiaries..In the last three months, a great number of peasants belonging to the agrarian reform sector have been killed: likewise several technicians of the Ministry of Agriculture and ISTA..These bloody acts have been carried out by uniformed men of the National Guard and Treasury Police, accompanied by civilians of ORDEN." quoted by Covert Action Information Bulletin, April 1981, p.8

33. Bollinger "El Salvador," op. cit. p.319.

34. Broadhead and Herman, op. cit. p.111.

35. Both FTUN and UCS cited by Covert Action Information Bulletin, op. cit. p.8. See also AIFLD Report March-April 1980 p.4.

36. Armstrong & Shenk, op. cit. p.154.

37. Joaquin Villalobos, Le Monde Diplomatique (Mexico), June 1983, interviewed by Marta Harnecker. Translation: Militant International Review, (London) Autumn, 1983. p.19.

38. Bollinger "El Salvador," op. cit. p.319.

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41. Armstrong & Shenk, op. cit. pp. 167-173.

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44. Letter Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS) to President Jose Napoleon Duarte, December 10, 1981. See also Cynthia Arnson, El Salvador: A Revolution Confronts the United States (Washington, D.C.: Institute For Policy Studies, 1982) p.77

45. Diskin and Sharpe, op. cit. p. 541.

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50. Department of Social Sciences, University of Central America, March-April, 1982, cited by Americas Watch, op. cit. 176; Professor Robert Leikin, testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 1, 1982; cited by Americas Watch, Labor Rights in El Salvador, Washington, D.C. March 1988, pp. 166-167.

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68. Rosenburg op. cit. p.41; Bollinger 1987, op. cit. p.381.

69. Diskin and Sharpe, op. cit. p.535.

70. Alan Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," The Progressive, May 1984 pp. 20-24

71. Staughton Lynd and Tom Hayden, The Other Side (New York: New American Library, 1967); See also Michael Parenti, The Anti-Communist Impulse (New York: Random House, 1968) p.232.

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CHAPTER 3

THE AFL-CIO AND THE RISE OF THE SANDINISTAS

The revolutionary developments which occurred in El Salvador in 1979-80, and the AFL-CIO's role in those developments, cannot be fully explained without reference to the insurrection which occurred in Nicaragua in 1978-79, an event which culminated in the collapse of the Somoza dynasty after 43 years of dictatorial rule. The successful insurrection in Nicaragua accelerated the movement against the Romero regime in El Salvador, leading to the reformist coup of October 1979 and a period of intense activity on the part of AIFLD in the implementation of the land reform and, later, in the development of a bloc of unions which rejected revolutionary alternatives in favour of promised reforms.

The final overthrow of Somoza was accomplished by the armed combattants of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional -FSLN) supported by a mass insurrection and general strike in the major cities. The events were only partially coordinated by the FSLN's military command and urban cadre; many of the actions which led to the fall of Somoza were of a spontaneous character. The mass participation of the Nicaraguan working class,

peasantry, and urban petit-bourgeois in the physical removal of the regime gave the Nicaraguan revolution a peculiar vitality, a factor which has contributed to the revolution's distinct appeal to left-liberals and radicals in the United States and throughout the world. [1]

For the conservative wing of the AFL-CIO leadership, however, the only acceptable form of social transformation - the gradual liberalization of the regime leading to full-fledged democracy - had manifestly failed to occur; now the door was open, it was feared, for the revolutionary left to transform the country into a satellite of the Soviet Union. It was hoped that the "democratic" trade unions supported by AIFLD would now obstruct the radical agenda of the Sandinistas, as had been achieved in other Latin American countries in the post-war period (See Chapter One).

The AFL-CIO Executive Council and the full Convention in 1979, however, openly applauded Somoza's demise. Moreover, the AFL-CIO declared it was "ready to assist..the rebuilding of that nation (Nicaragua) and of the trade unions through a crash program that will contribute to the development of strong workers and campesino unions." [2] The AFL-CIO's offer indicated that, in its own view, the Federation's State Department-financed intervention in Nicaragua was of pivotal political significance to the entire continent: "The assistance of the AFL-CIO is essential to the maintenance and further development of a free, democratic, labor movement in the Americas." [3]

U.S. Intervention and the Somoza Era.

The history of Nicaragua in the twentieth century is a history of U.S. intervention. In 1909, the U.S. sent troops in support of a successful attempt to remove Jose Santos Zelaya whose Liberal government had engaged in talks with various European countries over the possible construction of a inter-oceanic canal. This challenged the perceived right of the U.S. to determine events on the American continent - the Monroe Doctrine - thus prompting a show of U.S. military force in favour of the Conservative opposition in Nicaragua. From 1912 to 1925, and from 1926 to 1933, Nicaragua was occupied by U.S. Marines, a measure which secured U.S. control over the nation's banks, custom houses, foreign investment, and canal options. [4]

U.S. intervention sustained Conservative governments in Nicaragua throughout this period, but it also inspired resistance. An armed nationalist, anti-imperialist guerilla force emerged under the leadership of Augusto Cesar Sandino, which caused the Marines to withdraw from the country in 1933. Before their departure, the Marines established the National Guard under the leadership of Anastasio Somoza Garcia. The Guard assassinated Sandino, routed the guerillas, and seized power in 1936 - the first year of the Somoza dynasty which would be toppled by the latter-day followers of Sandino in 1979. [5]

This historical sketch is essential if the AFL-CIO's role in Nicaragua - and Nicaragua's impact on the AFL-CIO - is to be fully understood. The legacy of U.S. military and political intervention in Nicaragua, especially given the recorded brutality of the Marines and the U.S.- supported Somoza dictatorship, provided a deep seedbed for anti-Americanism in Nicaragua and therefore seriously undermined the reform objectives of AIFLD and the Alliance For Progress.

AIFLD in Nicaragua.

By the time AIFLD entered Nicaragua in 1965, Luis Somoza Debayle - son of Anastasio - had developed his own method of dealing with the trade unions. In the Somoza tradition, important sections of the small trade union body were co-opted with promises of limited reform. [6] The unions which supported the pro-Soviet Nicaraguan Socialist Party (Partido Socialista de Nicaragua -PSN) registered their support for Somoza as a measure of commitment to Moscow's policy of anti-fascist unity during World War Two. With the onset of the Cold War, Somoza repressed the PSN and its supporters in the unions. Towards the end of the 1950s only 4% of the economically active workforce was unionised. [7] By the early 1960s, using a combination of co-option and repression, Somoza seemed to be well in control of the trade unions. The General Confederation of Workers (Confederacion General de Trabajadores -CGT) had been co-opted and corrupted, and the

remainder of the labour movement was repressed. [8]

In 1959 the AFL-CIO Executive Council made clear its belief that the Somoza regime was incubating revolution and urged the trade unions in Nicaragua to support "democratic forces inside and outside the country to solve peacefully the political crisis caused by the continued existence of Somoza...If they continue to passively support the status quo, the democratic unions of Nicaragua will leave the field open to the manoeuvering of Communists." [9]

At the following Convention in 1961 the Executive Council applauded the support registered by the non-communist unions in Nicaragua for the Alliance For Progress. The EC expressed an unqualified belief in the remedial powers of the Alliance, which, it predicted, would bring about nothing less than "a peaceful transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, thus avoiding violent upheavals which might be exploited by communists and other anti-democratic elements to seize power." [10] Approximately two decades later, the AFL-CIO would express anguish that the scenario they believed had been averted - violent revolution leading to a seizure of power by the left - was indeed being played out.

The arrival of AIFLD, however, coincided with a period of limited industrialisation in Nicaragua, bringing with it a significant upturn in trade union organizing. The level of the economically active population in unions reached 10%. [10] The Council of Union Unification (Consejo de Unificacion Sindical -CUS) became the union formation supported by AIFLD

and affiliated to the ICFTU's regional organ, the ORIT (Organizacion Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores - See Chapter One). Indeed, with CUS's affiliation in 1962 ORIT now had an affiliate federation in every country in Latin America, a fact which testified to the institutional hegemony of the unions who maintained formal links with the AFL-CIO and espoused an unambiguous opposition to communism.

The Confederation of Union Unification (CUS).

The record of the CUS from the time of its formation until the fall of Somoza conforms to the pattern preferred by the AFL-CIO and AIFLD, that is, it pursued policies which avoided open confrontation with the regime and was fervently anti-communist. This moderate stance towards the state authorities and the employers was motivated by a belief that political and economic reforms were possible, even imminent, when capitalist development in Nicaragua was fully consolidated. In the interim, the CUS sought recognition from the regime as a legitimate and unthreatening entity clearly different from other workers' organisations who espoused and pursued class-struggle doctrines.

While this overall orientation determined that a certain similarity existed between, say, the CUS and the Salvadoran campesino union UCS established by AIFLD in 1967, there are also important differences reflecting the peculiar character of the respective regimes and the sectors of the workforce

organised. As discussed in Chapter Two, the high level of population density and the concomitant scarcity of land in El Salvador ensured that the UCS's project to win land reform reflected the genuine (and urgent) needs of the campesino population, notwithstanding the non-confrontational stance of the UCS. This fact alone made it extremely likely that the UCS would develop into a vibrant organisation which was eventually attacked by the landowning oligarchy and their supporters. In the case of the CUS in Nicaragua, which organised mainly service economy workers such as waiters, taxi-drivers, airline workers, (although banana workers and longshoremen were also organised by the CUS) a relatively stable and comfortable relationship between the CUS and the regime became established. Indeed, the CUS has been accused of holding one of its conventions in a Somoza family mansion and of inviting Somoza's labour minister to the event. [12]

The apparent lack of conflict between CUS and Somoza, compounded by the moderate reformist ideology both of the CUS leadership and that of its U.S. sponsors, helped ensure that, when other groups of workers moved into action against the dictatorship in the 1970s, the CUS continued to espouse "non-political" trade unionism. AIFLD, as late as 1977, expressed an undaunted faith in its gradualist perspective for the CUS, and therefore looked upon its work in Nicaragua with some satisfaction. The Institute reported, "AIFLD's role during this period (1964-76) has...been responsible for the fact that a majority of organized workers are now represented

by democratic trade unions." [13] The Institute had "trained a great number of trade unionists who are now holding positions of responsibility in the democratic trade union movement." [14] Collective bargaining agreements at this point numbered 118, compared to only three that existed in 1964. AIFLD was confident of a gradual improvement in the performance and size of the democratic trade unions. AIFLD's accounting budget for Nicaragua between 1976-81 was projected to be $149,000, a figure that would be radically adjusted upward following the unanticipated fall of Somoza in 1979. While some mild criticisms of the regime and its puppet federation the CGT were registered, AIFLD was satisfied with the steady progress of the CUS and the "democratic" unions within the established political framework. It is both significant and revealing that AIFLD considered that the principal problem for the CUS came not from the dictatorship but from its challengers. As AIFLD expressed it, "The united and militant actions of he leftist (union) confederations is a continuous threat to the survival of free and democratic trade unionism." [15]

The Left Unions.

In the 1960s the left in Nicaragua was divided over the question of armed struggle in much the same way as the left in El Salvador, and, indeed, throughout many areas of Latin America and the neocolonial world. [16] Several Nicaraguan

unions and political formations rejected the economism of the pro-Soviet PSN (Nicaragua's CP) in favour of Castroite positions which promoted guerilla war. Unlike the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCES), which eventually joined the armed struggle (the first Communist Party in Latin America to clearly depart from the popular front electoralism preferred by Moscow), the PSN withheld its support for the guerilla strategy employed by the FSLN against Somoza, preferring a "national unity" option under the leadership of the so-called patriotic bourgeoisie. [17] This separation of the Moscow-line PSN from the FSLN persisted after 1979, a division to which opponents of U.S. intervention frequently made reference as a way of illustrating the indigenous, nationalistic, and nonaligned character of the Sandinista revolution. The opponents of the FSLN within the U.S., however, depicted the PSN-FSLN separation as nothing but a tactic preferred by Moscow to create precisely that impression. [17]

The organisation which later became the FSLN was formed in 1959, but it, too, became divided over the question of armed struggle. Three tendencies emerged, one of which was the Proletarian Tendency which rejected both the economism of the PSN and the guerillaist program of the other FSLN factions, preferring instead to develop a revolutionary strategy among the organisations of the urban working class, particularly the trade unions. The Proletarian Tendency's work in the unions is frequently regarded as an important

factor in securing the FSLN's support among urban workers during and following the insurrection of 1978-79, and in ensuring the hegemony of the FSLN over the labour movement thereafter. [19]

The devastating earthquake of 1972 was followed by serious political aftershocks. The redirection of international relief aid into the bank accounts of the regime's officials was one issue which helped trigger a wave of industrial militancy by the left unions. In 1973 the Democratic Union of Liberation (Union Democratica de Liberacion -UDEL) was formed by leaders of the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, winning the support of the trade unions close to the Moscow-line PSN. These unions formed a federation known as the General Confederation of Workers-Independent (Confederacion General de Trabajadores-Independiente -CGT-i), that is, "independent" of the Somoza-controlled CGT. The "social christian" Workers Central of Nicaragua (Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua -CTN) was also part of UDEL during this period but became opponents of the FSLN following the consolidation of the revolution under Sandinista direction. The CUS, alone with Somoza's CGT, were the only union federations not included in the UDEL. [20]

At this stage, then, the FSLN was only a component part of the broad opposition to Somoza, which included political parties and trade unions of the centre, centre-right, and business organisations. The latter opposed Somoza's preponderant political and economic position in Nicaragua (the

Somoza family owned roughly one quarter of the country's cultivated land) which, compounded by the regime's corruption, they believed retarded national development within a capitalist framework.

In the mid-1970s the FSLN increased its armed operations, with the Proletarian Tendency securing organisational gains in the urban areas. By 1978 the Nicaraguan revolution had reached a critical stage.

Trade Unions and the Insurrection.

The dramatic events during the weeks and months leading to the fall of Somoza cannot be fully conveyed or discussed here. However, it is necessary to stress the degree of popular participation, much of it spontaneous, which, complemented by the guerilla actions of the FSLN, overthrew Somoza. It is also necessary to remark on the enormous loss of life - an estimated 55,000 - that was incurred during the insurrectionary period. As Somoza fled Nicaragua, he ordered his airforce to dispatch its bombs on the working class districts of Managua, thus inflating the number of dead and injured, and inflicting enormous infrastructural damage on the capital city.

As the trade unions in Nicaragua entered the insurrectionary year of 1979, the UDEL had become part of a larger Broad Opposition Front (Frente Amplio -FAO). The FAO had called two general strikes in August and September 1978

and a third in June 1979. [21] Meanwhile, in July 1978 the FSLN formed the United People's Movement (Movimiento Pueblo Unido -MPU) which was supported by some left trade unions. The FAO, and thus the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, continued to influence the direction of the movement against the dictatorship. In August 1978 the FAO called a general strike which was supported by the CGT-I, CTN, and the CUS. [22] Towards the end of 1978, however, the FAO supported a proposal for the U.S. to mediate between Somoza and the opposition movement to help secure a transfer of power.

Clearly, the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie viewed with trepidation the increasing militancy of the movement and the emerging power of the FSLN. The proposal to involve the U.S. as a mediator instigated a decisive realignment of the anti-Somoza forces, effectively handing over leadership to the FSLN. The CGT-I and the CTN left the FAO to join the FSLN-supported MPU, leaving the CUS, who had been the last of the bona fide trade union federations to register opposition to the regime, as the only union formation formally aligned to the bourgeois opposition to Somoza. The alliance with the Nicaraguan bourgeois and clear opposition to the FSLN marked the distinctive features of the CUS's political orientation following the fall of Somoza.

The Transformation of the Nicaraguan Labour Movement.

The fall of Somoza on 19 July, 1979, transformed political relations in Nicaragua. One of the most visible and significant consequences of this transformation was the rapid growth of trade unions identifying with the FSLN. In the period immediately following the insurrection the Sandinista Workers Central (Central Sandinista de Trabajadores -CST) became the country's principal union federation, with the pro-Sandinista Association of Rural Workers (Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo -ATC) becoming the largest union formation in the countryside. Other significant union sectors identifying with the Sandinistas were the Federation of Health Workers (Federacion de Trabajadores de la Salud -FETSALUD), the Nicaraguan Press Union (Union de Periodistas Nicaraguenses -UPN), the public employees' federation, the National Union of Employees (Union Nacional de Empleados -UNE), and the National Association of Nicaraguan Educators (Asociacion Nacional de Educadores Nicaraguenses -ANDEN). Later, in 1981, the National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (Union Nacional de Agricultures y Ganaderos -UNAG) emerged as a pro-Sandinista organisation representing small farmers. [23]
Commentators both critical and supportive of the Sandinistas agreed that the unions identifying with the FSLN quickly established a clear numerical superiority over the combined forces of the pre-1979 union federations. [24] By 1983 the CST claimed 111,498 members, the ATC claimed 40,000, and the

other pro-Sandinista federations, UNE, ANDEN, FETSALUD, and UPN, claimed 57,299 between them. Excluding the small property owners in UNAG, the Sandinista unions claimed a total membership of just over 200,000. The overall level of unionisation rose ninefold from 27,000 in July 1979 to 233,000 in December 1983. [25]

The federations which existed under Somoza, with the exception of Somoza's CGT (which disintegrated), continued to function following the insurrection. The Moscow-line PSN's federation, the CGT-I, maintained a significant base in the urban sector, claiming 17,000 members in 1983. Two smaller federations, the Confederation of Action and Labor Union Unification (Central de Accion y Unidad Sindical -CAUS) and the Workers Front (Frente Obrero -FO), maintained positions to the left of the Sandinista unions. On the right of the Nicaraguan labour movement stood the CTN and the CUS. The eleven trade union federations, each embracing a distinct political ideology, suggested that a genuine pluralism prevailed in the Nicaraguan labour movement during the early years of the revolution. However, frequently intense rivalries developed as the pro-Sandinista federations attempted to steer the labour movement behind FSLN positions.

Stripped to basics, the FSLN and the unions which supported it set as their objective the unity of the labour movement around an agenda which sought trade union participation in economic recovery, workplace discipline, and the prevention of strikes. Trade unionism which advanced the

interests of one sector of workers without regard for the broader economic and political consequences was opposed. This "productionist" perspective provoked opposition from the unions to the left of the FSLN which believed that, until the economic power of the bourgeoisie had been expropriated, the working class should pursue trade unionism appropriate to an intense - and unfinished - class struggle situation. Indeed, Sandinista union leaders in the CST had themselves questioned the wisdom of leaving much of the country's production and distribution under private ownership and, particularly during the early post-insurrection period, urged the FSLN to move decisively against the bourgeoisie as a class. [26] In the rural sector, the FSLN discouraged worker militancy as a means to appease certain private producers - a policy which caused the pro-Sandinista peasants' union, the ATC, to lose some popularity. [27] The ATC responded by mobilizing its members to secure government confiscation of non-Somoza farms which its members had taken over. While agreeing to this demand, the FSLN strongly urged that no further takeovers of private farms occur. The ruling party remained committed to a mixed economy which ensured economic space for the "patriotic" bourgeoisie. [28]

The FSLN's productionist perspective also provoked opposition from the CUS who felt that the policies of the FSLN compromised both their political independence and their actions in the workplace. In the period that lay ahead the CUS would display a political militancy which stood in

complete contrast to its accommodation of the Somoza regime. One writer close to the situation recorded: "For the other (non-Sandinista) trade unions, independent of their left or right wing political sympathies, the struggle centred on economic demands, confronting the revolutionary state as if it were the new boss or owner. This consumed the tremendous energies of the labour movement without putting forth any solutions to the crucial question of what role workers should play in the new society heralded by the revolutionary triumph." [29]

The challenge of the non-Sandinista trade unions to the new government was quite formidable. The Sandinistas needed to intervene in order to contain a wave of land takeovers and factory occupations by sections of the urban and rural workforce. In as much as the left union federations, particularly the FO and CAUS, supported these popular actions, many of the Sandinistas' early battles were with what they described as the "ultra-left". [30] The struggle against the left was an integral part of the FSLN's effort to win the cooperation of sections of the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie in the project of economic recovery and resulted in a government ban on factory occupations and strikes introduced in September 1981. Indeed, key figures in the bourgeois opposition to Somoza had been invited to take positions in the new "Government of National Reconstruction", including businessman Alfonso Robelo who played a leading role in the FAO and would later become politically associated with certain trade union

leaders in the U.S. (See Chapter Six).

A struggle also ensued between the revolutionary government and the sector of the trade union movement standing to its right. In this conflict the main Sandinista federation, the CST, became the arch rival of the CUS. The AIFLD-supported federation, having distinguished itself by being the only union federation formally linked the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, quickly became accused of being a front for the CIA in Nicaragua. [31] The CUS countered the allegations by presenting itself as a legitimate part of the anti-Somoza opposition, pointing to their participation in the 1978 strikes against Somoza and to the fatal shooting of their leader, Luis Medrano Flores, in Managua during January 1979.

As early as August 1979 the CUS began to document cases of FSLN-inspired disruption of its activities. The CUS complained that armed members of the FSLN had harassed their leaders and that FSLN commanders in the port town of Corinto and Chinandega were accusing the CUS leaders of being imperialists and counter-revolutionaries. In November, however, the CUS responded positively to the CST's call for trade union federations to unite in one national confederation. The call for unity resulted in the formation of the Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council (Coordinadora Sindical de Nicaragua -CSN). [32] The CUS joined the CSN, but withdrew after only one month. Of the eleven major union federations in Nicaragua only the CUS and the CTN distanced themselves from the CST's unity initiative;

the left federations chose to participate while maintaining their independent identity and political positions. Furthermore, the CUS was the only major union federation not to sign the Pronunciamiento Conjunto (Joint Announcement), which called for a Council of State, a national forum representing all political parties and trade union, women's, youth, etc., to be established in May, 1980. [33] Nevertheless, the trade union federations accorded representative status on the Council of State included the CUS and the CTN with 1 seat each, the Sandinista federations CST, ATC, FETSALUD, occupied a total of 7 seats, the CGT-I (Moscow communist) 2 seats, and the left federation CAUS had 2 seats. Trade unions, therefore, occupied a total of 13 of the Council of State's 51 seats. [34]

By early 1980 the CUS complained that their leaders in Leon had been subject to arrests. For the AFL-CIO the FSLN's actions against the CUS provided an explanation for the latter federation's poor performance in contests with the CST, resulting in a fall in CUS membership from 12,000 in late 1979 to approximately 2,000 in 1983. [35] In October 1980 the CST decided, after some debate, to affiliate to the pro-Soviet World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) based in Prague. [36] This affiliation, together with the incidents of harassment reported by the CUS, led the AFL-CIO leadership to shift decisively against the Sandinistas. By the AFL-CIO's full Convention in 1981 the Executive Council accused the Sandinistas of using totalitarian methods in "their efforts

to silence all democratic opposition." [37]

At this stage the CUS's links to the AFL-CIO had clearly affected its political fortunes. The AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs (DIA) and AIFLD viewed the CUS as a rearguard defense against communism and funneled resources to the federation that, while in proportion to the political tasks ahead, appeared completely disproportionate to the CUS's tiny membership. As one source noted, "Immediately after the FSLN's triumph, AIFLD dramatically stepped up its funding of the CUS. In late 1979, AID (the Agency for International Development -a U.S. Government agency) granted AIFLD $500,000 for projects `strengthening free labor and related organizations in the Caribbean area and Nicaragua.'" [38] In April 1981, "AIFLD's Nicaraguan operations were bolstered by another AID grant of $350,000 `to establish a union-cooperative alliance responsive to the needs of unsalaried workers'" [39] This financial support sustained the CUS, but it also subjected the federation to constant attacks by the Sandinista press and the unions under Sandinista leadership. The Sandinista inspired campaign against the CUS resulted in the expulsion of AIFLD's representative in Managua in 1981 and the closure of AIFLD's office in Managua in June 1983. [40]

These events layed down the battle lines between AIFLD and the DIA on the one hand and the Sandinista government on the other. For a significant section of U.S. trade union activists and lower-level leadership, however, the fall of

Somoza and the social programs and overall pro-labour orientation of the Sandinistas were causes for celebration, not condemnation. Thus, another set of battle lines was being drawn, this time between the labour movement's Cold War foreign policy establishment and their supporters on the one hand, and those who felt the Nicaraguan revolution deserved more support than criticism on the other.

Covert War: The CIA, the Contras, and the International Labour Movement.

In the period when the DIA and AIFLD had successfully steered the leaders of the AFL-CIO behind a policy hostile to Sandinista rule in Nicaragua, the U.S. Government had begun its own hostilities against the revolutionary government. The shattered remnants of Somoza's National Guard, who fled the country in 1979, had now regrouped and were ready to embark on a military campaign to overthrow the Sandinistas. The new U.S. Administration under the leadership of President Reagan immediately implemented measures to assist the military capabilities of the former Guardsmen who had established bases in Honduras. In March 1981 the President secretly endorsed the CIA's plan to extend its activities in Central America, which, by the end of the year, had resulted in a $20 million programme to arm and train the rebels - now referred to as contras inside Nicaragua - culminating in their first major military assault inside Nicaraguan territory in December. [41]

In 1987 former contra leader, Edgar Chammorro, described how the early platforms of the disparate rebels focused on "the importance of private property and a return to the earlier economic privileges and investment opportunities of the old Nicaragua. They emphasised classic capitalist principles (.)" [42] Under CIA direction, claimed Chammorro, the contras discontinued espousing a return to Somocism and instead characterised themselves as a force fighting the sovietization of Nicaragua, an anti-communist army, in order to win the support of Congress and to intimidate potential supporters of the Sandinistas in the U.S. [43] Indeed, the CIA, according to Chammorro, restructured the contra leadership, giving positions to prominent figures in the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie. Thus the Directorate of the contras included figures like Adolfo Calero, who had led the business opposition to Somoza in 1978, and Enrique Bermudez, a National Guard Colonel [44]. By late 1982 the CIA was working to win broad-based support for the contras, who were now using the name Nicaraguan Democratic Force (Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense -FDN) in the U.S.

The CIA's promotion of the FDN as a an anti-communist group struggling for democracy was clearly designed to appeal to a broad segment of political opinion in the U.S. The AFL-CIO leadership was already anti-Sandinista; it seems highly plausible to suggest that the CIA anticipated a firm endorsement of the FDN from the AFL-CIO, especially as AFL-CIO foreign policy had in the past concurred and perhaps actively

cooperated with CIA objectives.

The CIA also directed the FDN towards the Socialist International, whose relationship to the social democratic national union federations by way of party-union affiliations raised the possibility of influencing the ICFTU. This initiative was particularly important since the AFL-CIO had disaffiliated from the ICFTU in 1969 over the latter's more conciliatory position regarding relationships with trade union federations in the Eastern bloc. Thus, the AFL-CIO's formidable conservative presence was now missing from the ICFTU and this aided the consolidation of pro-Sandinista sentiment. Chammorro, then a member of the FDN Directorate, recalled a meeting with the CIA: "In January (1983), the CIA brought people from Washington and Miami to brief us on the Socialist International...The SI had a meeting coming up in Australia, and it was the CIA's idea that we could approach them with the apparently sincere concern that the Sandinistas were aligned to the Soviet Union." The S.I. leaders, however, refused to meet with the FDN. [43]

The S.I. had been swift to extend support initially to the bourgeois opposition to Somoza in the form of UDEL and FAO, and later, in November 1978, to the FSLN. Following the Sandinista victory the S.I. called for aid to Nicaragua and established a 'Committee for the Defence of the Revolution in Nicaragua' under the presidency of Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzales. Other members included Willie Brandt, Olaf Palme, Francois Mitterand and Michael Manley. [44] Until the

CIA-FDN initiative in 1983 only the Venezuelan social democratic party, Accion Democratica, and social democratic parties in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica protested the S.I.'s support for the Sandinistas, who they considered to be pro-Soviet. [45] However, other sources cited the opposition of Portugal's leading social democrat Mario Soares to the Sandinistas in early 1981. [46]

The AFL-CIO's re-affiliation to the ICFTU in 1982 introduced another variable in the S.I.'s controversy over the Sandinistas. The leading European social democratic parties supported the FSLN, but Nicaragua's affiliate to the ICFTU was the CUS, backed wholeheartedly by the AFL-CIO, both of whom were strongly anti-Sandinista. As a result the CUS found itself, as one writer expressed it, "at the center of a profound crisis in the Socialist International over the true nature of the Sandinista regime. The Social Democratic union organizations remain divided over support for the CUS, especially after having embraced the FSLN government as the true champions of the workers in Nicaragua." [47]

The fairly deep pro-FSLN sentiment within the S.I. and the ICFTU can be explained in several ways. Firstly, the anti-Soviet premises upon which the ICFTU was established during the Cold War period had become diluted in the era of detente. Secondly, the interventionist role of the U.S. in Vietnam and in other areas of the neocolonial world and the destabilisation of reformist governments like that of Allende's Chile and, to a lesser extent, Jamaica under Michael

Manley (whose own reputation in the S.I. had perhaps been enhanced by his struggle with the International Monetary Fund during the 1976-80 period) had tilted international social democracy into a posture much more critical of U.S. foreign policy. [48] Thirdly, as regards Nicaragua, the barbarity of the Somoza regime, itself backed by the U.S., inevitably accorded great prestige to the force which brought about its downfall. Fourthly, the FSLN's program of political pluralism, a mixed economy, and a non-aligned foreign policy, and their efforts towards promoting health and literacy among the Nicaraguan poor somewhat overshadowed the question of the FSLN's apparent fondness for the Soviet Union and Cuba. Moreover, in the area of trade unionism the credibility of the CUS in the eyes of many affiliates to the ICFTU had been seriously impaired by its accomodationist stance towards the Somoza regime, the growth of the trade union movement since the Sandinistas came to power and the political alliance of the CUS with Nicaraguan business interests.

Another significant factor pertained to the reputation of the AFL-CIO in international social democratic trade union politics. During the 1970s the S.I. began promoting a more elaborate and distinct policy towards the third world. Some of the S.I.'s main formulations were embraced in the Brandt Report of 1980, which expressed concern at the striking disparity between rich and poor countries - the much discussed "north-south" divide. This analysis, derivative of dependency theory, marked a significant departure from the orthodox

developmentalism accepted - and favoured - by AIFLD and the DIA. The AFL-CIO's position, while critical of the multinationals for not respecting trade unionism outside the U.S., rejected any theory which characterised the U.S. as an imperialist power either in an economic or political sense. The Brandt analysis bordered on such a conclusion and therefore contained an anti-Americanism unacceptable to the DIA and the AFL-CIO's foreign policy establishment.

As Latin America entered an economic downturn in 1980-81, leading to falling living standards, the debt crisis and IMF-imposed austerity measures, the Latin American section of the ICFTU, the ORIT, began to talk more in the language of Brandt and the S.I. Voices were raised within ORIT which urged the AFL-CIO to rejoin the ICFTU so that the international labour movement could be better equipped to respond to the economic crisis. Furthermore, in 1981, during ORIT's 10th Congress in Canada, ORIT's relationship to the AFL-CIO, and with it the role of AIFLD, became a focus of criticism. The statement adopted by the Congress referred to the "progressive deterioration...of ORIT's image" because workers perceived the organisation to be an accomplice in the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy. In a transparent attack on AIFLD, ORIT declared that, "Authentic solidarity (came from the union movement) without any kind of contribution from governments and/or employers and their corporations." [49]

In 1982, perhaps wishing to intercept an even deeper crisis in ORIT, the AFL-CIO rejoined the ICFTU. Moreover, the

challenge in ORIT coincided with the AFL-CIO's decision to remove from AIFLD's board of trustees representatives of U.S. capital with interests in Latin America. The break with this two-decade practice was itself amicable. J. Peter Grace of the W.R. Grace Company remarked that a "friendly and supportive" relationship would continue between AIFLD and the business sector. [50]

In November 1982 officials from ORIT, the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO visited Managua and voiced their concern over the welfare of the CUS. [51] Despite this protest, criticism of the Sandinistas within the ICFTU remained generally muted. As the covert war against Nicaragua intensified, ICFTU criticisms began to focus more on the government in Washington than the one in Managua. The FDN's direct approach to the S.I. had failed, cordoning off any FDN contact with the ICFTU through this means. However, the AFL-CIO remained an important arena of struggle as far as support for the FDN contras was concerned. If the FDN could win the chief representatives of the U.S. labour movement to a pro-contra position, this would influence Congress and lead, perhaps, to an anti-Sandinista counter-attack within the S.I. and the ICFTU. Moreover, AFL-CIO leadership support for the contras could also influence millions of U.S. trade unionists, both building support for and weakening resistance to U.S. Government policy in Central America.

Conclusion.

The Nicaraguan revolution was achieved and consolidated with the active participation of the broad sectors of the Nicaraguan working class, peasantry and petit-bourgeois. The trade unions were centre-stage actors in the revolutionary process set in motion by the Managua earthquake of 1972. The FSLN, with its partial base in the unions and the urban working class, became the vanguard of the revolution and secured hegemony over Nicaraguan political life. Throughout this entire period the AIFLD-sponsored CUS had taken conservative positions, leading ultimately to outright opposition to the Sandinista government and a political alliance with the remaining Nicaraguan capitalists. The CUS's opposition to the Sandinistas reflected ideological positions shared by the more conservative sections of the AFL-CIO leadership.

The ability of the CUS and the AFL-CIO to affect the course of events in Nicaragua during the 1978-82 period proved to be relatively minor. The CUS had not grown quickly enough, despite its accommodation with Somoza, to secure a firm base in the Nicaraguan working class for its trade union and political ideology. The pro-FSLN unions quickly established hegemony over the labour movement in the post-insurrection period, although the "productionist perspective" of the leading party within the context of continuing private ownership of more than half of industry and agriculture

brought with it serious tensions.

The onset of the U.S.-supported contra war against Nicaragua changed the character of the CUS's opposition to Sandinistas. The CIA's control of the main contra group, the FDN, ensured that their now existed an alternative to the Sandinistas, one which was armed and supplied by the world's foremost military power. Moreover, the anti-communism and anti-sovietism espoused by the FDN largely replicated that of the official Cold War approach of the AFL-CIO's foreign policy apparatus. If the DIA and AIFLD embraced the FDN and could successfully promote this position within the AFL-CIO's Executive Council, then one of the world's principal union federations in terms of its size and influence might be pulled behind a policy of counterrevolution. Furthermore, AFL-CIO support for the FDN could be directed towards the U.S. Congress to help sustain the flow of arms and logistical support for the insurgents. In the context of such a scenario, the hitherto minor role of the CUS and the AFL-CIO in influencing the direction of the Nicaraguan revolution might turn into its opposite, especially if domestic and international support for the Sandinistas declined.

Chapters One, Two, and Three have dealt with the international policy of the AFL-CIO, the historical development and consolidation of Cold War unionism and its impact on the postwar international labour movement and global politics generally, and the intervention of the AFL-CIO in the conflict in Central America. Chapter Four documents the

development of anti-intervention activity in the U.S. trade unions and how this, somewhat paradoxically, coincided with the Reagan Administration according the AFL-CIO an even more prominent position in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy.

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46. Hertogs, op. cit. p. 79*

47. Mateo op. cit. p.32

48. Fitzroy Ambursley, "Jamaica: From Michael Manley to Edward Seaga," in Crisis in the Caribbean ed. Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), pp. 72-104.

49. From Agenda Item 1, ORIT-ICFTU, Toronto May 15-16, 1981. For a useful discussion on this Congress and the

changes taking place in the ORIT, see J. Godio, Sindicalismo y politica n America Latina (Caracas: Instituto Latinamericano de Investigaciones Sociales, 1983.)

50. AIFLD Report, May-June 1981.

51. U.S. Embassy, Managua, op. cit. p.10

CHAPTER 4

INTERVENTION AND ANTI-INTERVENTION: THE FOREIGN POLICY CONFLICT IN U.S. TRADE UNIONS

This chapter documents and explains the rise of anti-intervention sentiment and activity in the U.S. labour movement in the early 1980s. This rise, however, coincided with the AFL-CIO's international affairs apparatus being invited to play a more active and visible role in the formation and implementation of U.S. Government foreign policy.

The developments described below need to be viewed against a background of economic recession and a changed political climate in the United States. The Reagan Administration came into office in 1980 and soon displayed an adversarial approach towards organised labour. The firing of striking members of the Professional Air-Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in late 1981 marked the beginning of a new period of conflict relations between U.S. labour and the U.S. Government. [1] Later the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), once a pillar of post-war liberal industrial relations machinery, produced a series of decisions which limited the power of unions to organise and defend members' jobs. De-

regulation policies in areas such as trucking and transportation constituted another serious setback for unions, accelerating the unravelling of "pattern bargaining" - a practice whereby one union-company agreement set the norm for a series of others in the same industry. The new Administration also took measures to cut welfare programs such as food stamps and unemployment insurance.

These acts, many concluded, marked the end of the post-war social contract or social accord between labour, capital and the state. [2] Consensus arrangements in collective bargaining and industrial relations generally were partially or totally dismantled. Social machinery set in place to contain or manage industrial conflict was now being utilised as a means of weakening the labour movement. Even advocates of class-harmony in the labour relations "field" were forced to acknowledge that industrial relations in the U.S. had been transformed, although some argued that new forms of cooperation and compromise would emerge once the U.S. economy had been put on a more competitive footing. [3]

The dawn of the Reagan era also coincided with a clear shift to the right by the Democratic Party. This shift had actually began in the 1970s with the defeat of Democratic candidate George McGovern in the presidential contest of 1972. The AFL-CIO's considerable influence over party policy began to wane and during the Carter Administration as capital began to aggressively court the Democrats. The so-called New Deal coalition collapsed as Keynesian policy alternatives fell out

of fashion, surrendering the Party mainstream to business-influenced elements who shared many of the objectives being pursued by Reagan Republicans.

In the late 1970s the U.S. labour movement unsuccessfully attempted to launch a political coalition with a section of industrial capital (the National Accord). As the 1980s got underway a combination of political and economic factors resulted in serious reductions in the size and strength of U.S. trade unions. Following the UAW-Chrysler agreement of 1979, concessionary bargaining - "givebacks" - became widespread across all sectors of the economy covered by union contracts. Chrysler had argued that concessions were necessary to save the company. By the mid-1980s however, businesses demanding concessions were for the most part economically healthy but were clearly determined to take advantage of the new industrial relations climate. In virtually all areas of its activity the U.S. labour movement was in a period of retreat comparable to the 1920s.

The precise dimensions of labour movement decline and the political and economic conditions which undermined the post war social accord have been well documented and discussed elsewhere and will not be dealt with here. [4] The gravity of the situation was perhaps best expressed in the fall in the percentage of U.S. workers organised in unions. In 1970 roughly 24.7% of the U.S. workforce were organised; by 1980 this figure had fallen to 20.9%, and in 1986 it was 17.5%. [5] The AFL-CIO criticised government and employers for their

anti-union policies but failed to alter the general direction of events. Union resistance, when it did occur, came from isolated units that frequently suffered defeats. U.S. labour had entered a period of stagnation and decline that would span the entire decade. [6]

The "Central America"/"Anti-Intervention" Movement in the United States.

While the labour movement was retreating in the face of the political and economic offensive of capital and the state, the events in El Salvador and Nicaragua between 1979 and 1983 spawned a political movement in the United States that was distinct in its character but strikingly amorphous in its composition. The self-named "Central America Movement" or, alternatively, "Anti-Intervention Movement" (CA/AIM) embraced two fundamental sentiments. Firstly, many of its leading activists regarded the revolutionary forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador as legitimate and progressive movements worthy of general, and frequently uncritical, political support. Secondly, the CA/AIM was concerned that the Vietnam experience of the 1960s should not be re-lived in Central America in the 1980s. Many CA/AIM activists believed that the movement against the Vietnam war took too long to gather momentum, therefore active opposition to direct U.S. intervention in Central America needed to be as forceful at the beginning of the conflict as the movement against the war in Vietnam was

in its latter stages.

The CA/AIM also reflected a deepening opposition to the U.S. Government's policy of sustaining repressive right-wing regimes in the name of "national security" or anti-communism. The Salvadoran military, armed and supplied by the U.S., had unleashed a genocidal repression against its opponents who had been labelled communist subversives. Towards the end of 1981 the remnants of Somoza's National Guard, under the guidance of the CIA, began a military insurgency against Nicaragua, purportedly to save the country from sovietization. Despite its diversity the CA/AIM unanimously opposed such "indirect" U.S. intervention on the grounds that this promoted repression and increased the prospects of a repeat of Vietnam.

The exact size and scope of the CA/AIM is difficult to assess. In 1985, the Central American Resource Center in Austin, Texas, compiled its own Directory of Central American Organizations listing more than 800 anti-interventionist groups across the U.S. concerned either specifically with Central America or with U.S. policy toward the region. [7] Another source estimated that the CA/AIM was "comprised of roughly 850 different support groups and organizations operating in all 50 states." [8]

The number of individual activists who took part in the movement is more difficult to establish. The degree and character of activity has varied over time. However, during the period 1980-88 the number of people in some way participating in political work or events around Central

America is likely to have exceeded one million. [9] Innumerable demonstrations, forums and other kinds of educational outreach work, in churches, highschools, universities, women's organisations and trade unions suggest that this number is not an exaggeration. Indeed, it may be a serious underestimation. By 1987 it was believed that more than 100,000 people in the U.S. had visited Nicaragua on tours organised by numerous CA/AIM groups, religious organisations and charities. [10] The foreigners in Nicaragua (internacionalistas) included many who spent time working on the harvest and construction brigades. One organisation, Tecnica, brought skilled workers to Nicaragua from the U.S. during their vacations. [11] Another important CA/AIM initiative emerged in 1984 when the Washington based religious coalition Inter-Religious Task Force created the Pledge of Resistance. By mid-1986 80,000 had publicly committed themselves to "actively resist the escalating war in Central America" in the spirit of protest identified with Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. [12]

From its earliest moments in 1979-80 the CA/AIM began to effect the discussions and activities of trade union locals. The argument against military intervention in Central America, because of its religious, moral, economic, ideological, and other dimensions, precluded the development of what might be described as a peculiarly "trade union" strain of the broader CA/AIM. However, as will be discussed below, the anti-union agenda of the Reagan Administration, and

actual or perceived changes in the U.S. and world economy, provided anti-interventionists in the trade unions with a range of arguments which convincingly married traditional and topical trade union concerns to the other reasons for opposing the Reagan Administration's Central America policy.

The CA/AIM and the U.S. Trade Unions: Changes Since Vietnam.

During the period of the conflict in Indochina union opposition to the Johnson-Nixon war policy grew as the war itself escalated and became more unpopular. To the wider public, however, the AFL-CIO appeared to be firmly behind the Commander-in-Chief right up until U.S. military disengagement in 1973. Labour movement support for the war was weakened when, in 1967, the UAW broke from the Federation after its President Walter Reuther clashed with George Meany over the AFL-CIO's unrestrained support for the military escalation of the conflict. Reuther had pioneered the purge of Communists from the CIO and generally advanced the Cold War in the U.S. labour movement and believed that U.S. labour needed to maintain a firm anti-Soviet global posture. However, Reuther was concerned that the social and economic problems which incubated Communist ideas should be addressed and, in the case of Vietnam, this required a negotiated peace. In this respect Reuther was a liberal interventionist in the same vein as Joseph Bierne of the CWA who had pioneered AIFLD (see Chapter One).

It is important to note that foreign policy was not the only issue that prompted the Reuther-Meany split. As with the more serious foreign policy differences in U.S. trade union history, Reuther's disagreement with Meany stemmed from a conflict of opinion regarding the overall direction the U.S. labour movement. The UAW, with a high proportion of black members, had supported Martin Luther King's march on Washington in 1963 while Meany and the AFL-CIO had decided not to participate. Just prior to the UAW departure Reuther claimed that the AFL-CIO "lack(ed) social vision" on questions such as civil rights. [13]

After 1967 the AFL-CIO Executive Council continued to support the war although lower-level officials and activists began to express opposition. Jerry Wurf, President of the then 400,000-member public sector union AFSCME and an opponent of Meany's pro-war stance, joined the Council in late 1969 and took up a solitary anti-war position. [14] In 1972 when George McGovern won the Democratic nomination for President, the Executive Council voted 27-3 not to endorse any of the candidates. Not since 1952 had the Federation failed to endorse a Democratic presidential nominee. The AFL-CIO leadership decided to punish McGovern for his opposition to the Vietnam war despite the fact that McGovern had consistently voted for union causes in Congress. [15]

In 1980-81 a segment of trade union opinion believed that the labour movement should register a clear opposition to intervention in Central America from the start. Leading

activists in this group frequently expressed support for the revolutionary project of the FSLN and the FMLN. In a sense, this layer of activists marked an area of overlap between the trade unions and the solidarity organisations which spearheaded the CA/AIM. In the Vietnam war period the AFL-CIO leadership and the anti-war movement viewed each other as adversaries and even the organised union opposition to the war frequently distanced itself from the rest of the anti-war protestors because of their perceived anti-Americanism. [16]

At least two things had changed since the Vietnam period. Firstly, the CA/AIM's principal organisations and leaders maintained a different disposition toward the unions. The labour movement was now considered to be receptive to arguments against intervention; resistance to "progressive" political positions was thought to have been weakened as a result of government or government-inspired attacks on the trade unions. Moreover, it was felt that the anti-intervention movement could both extend and legitimise itself by winning union support. Secondly, Central America activists, many having been active in the anti-war movement of the 1960s, were generally older and more prepared to operate within the political mainstream, such as building campaigns aimed at Congress or otherwise emulating standard pressure group methods. Unlike its predecessor during the Vietnam period, the CA/AIM was not a student-based movement concerned with promoting an alternative culture. [17] Most of the past generational barriers had disappeared, although

some clear political and social differences still existed between CA/AIM activists and the main body of trade union officials and activists. It was also true that many 1960s anti-war radicals had in their later years joined the labour movement as organisers and activists inspired more by the example of Saul Alinsky than that presented by George Meany. By the 1980s some found themselves located, as one of them expressed it, "at the periphery of the labor establishment." [18] Many changes had taken place since the days of the 1960s protests. One result of these changes was that, as one commentator observed, "this (CA/AIM) movement is much better organized and operates on the basis of much more calculated strategies than the highly spontaneous movement against the war in Vietnam." [19]

The generally constructive approach of the CA/AIM to the trade unions is perhaps best illustrated in the example of the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador (CISPES), itself the largest and most active of the CA/AIM organisations. CISPES was formed in October of 1980 after two founding meetings in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., and thereafter enjoyed a period of quite spectacular growth. By 1985 the group had established 92 "chapters" across the U.S., supported by a network of CISPES "affiliates" which numbered 300. The cohort of activists who formed CISPES had either come out of the anti-war movement of the 1960s, had been peace corp volunteers, or part of a small support network for the Sandinistas prior to their victory in 1979. [20] From the

outset CISPES declared itself to be a "solidarity" organisation that supported the FDR-FMLN.

CISPES articulated its approach to trade union work in an internal document compiled in 1981: "The labor movement has great potential power for our work...Work within labor may well have a broader appeal than with the alleged `general' groups who actually appeal to a very small progressive community." [21] For CISPES to insist on labour movement solidarity with the FDR-FMLN would be self-defeating, said the document, especially as the bulk of the AFL-CIO leadership supported U.S. intervention. However, CISPES accurately predicted that leadership support for U.S. intervention might eventually be weakened by "the very serious conflict between labor and the Administration on domestic issues." CISPES noted leftward movements within the leadership of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA), the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), and the International Association of Machinists (IAM), but these were too weak to tilt the AFL-CIO into a position that would legitimise or support the CA/AIM. The document concluded: "The people of Central America can not wait until American labor gets `straightened out'. For our solidarity work to be effective, we must work with labor as it presently exists...Labor insurgencies take decades, and the FDR-FMLN can not wait while we seek control of a union. Our work can contribute to a reformed, democratic unionism, but we are not that struggle. Our goal should be to maximise support for the Central American revolutionaries in the next

3-5 years." [22]

Anti-Intervention Committees and the U.S. Trade Unions.

Anti-intervention sentiment in the labour movement first manifested itself organisationally with the formation of loose city-based committees. During 1980 and 1981 individuals from various unions, some of them members of CISPES or other solidarity groups, established such committees first in New York, Boston, Seattle, and San Francisco as a response to repression unleashed in El Salvador following the general strike in 1980. The committees grew from a wave of demonstrations that were triggered by these events and the U.S. Government's decision to provide military aid to the Salvadoran regime. Large union forums and benefits were held in several major cities in the U.S.; in San Francisco 800 union members, including 40 local union presidents, signed an open letter opposing U.S. military aid and advisers being sent to El Salvador. In Boston, Local 201 of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), representing 10,000 defence workers, endorsed a New England Labor Conference Resolution against intervention. [23]

Also during this period the California-based International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) announced that its estimated 25,000 members would not handle weapons shipments to El Salvador. [21] One should note that the ILWU was expelled from the CIO during the McCarthy period

and continued thereafter as an independent union with its own foreign policy stance. Its leader, Harry Bridges, played an important role in the San Francisco general strike of 1934. [25] In a sense the ILWU's action stood at the intersection between two quite dissimilar left currents in U.S. trade unionism: the old Communist Party, merely a shadow of the organisation which played such an important role in the rise of the CIO, and the new current with its roots in the political movements of the 1960s. The New York Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, formed in July 1981, reflected the extent of anti-intervention sentiment even among union officials. Many of the officials who formed the New York committee had established a record with the dissident trade union component that opposed the war in Vietnam, although several also had "old Left" connections which stretched back to the 1940s. Others such as Cleveland Robinson, the Jamaican Secretary-Treasurer of District 65/UAW, had also played a major role in advancing the cause of civil rights in the labour movement during the late 1950s and the 1960s. This committee, then, also reflected a certain convergence of two generations of left politics in the U.S.

Significantly, none of the building trades unions - a formidable force in New York City and dominant on the New York Central Labor Council of the AFL-CIO - were represented on the Committee, although a Local officer of the Teamsters was included among the 24 Committee members. The building trades

unions were widely regarded to be politically conservative, in New York and elsewhere, and the Teamsters, outside of the AFL-CIO until 1987, frequently endorsed Republican candidates in U.S. Presidential elections. It is necessary to add, however, that the union leaders on the letterhead of the New York Labor Committee played a secondary and sometimes peripheral role in the ongoing functioning of the committee. These leaders were quite prepared to endorse activities, appear at fundraising events, etc., but most of the time-consuming work came to rest on the shoulders of a few non-leadership activists. Importantly, these activists were invariably more knowledgeable regarding the dynamics of the events in Central America than the union leaders on the Committee. [26]

At the meeting which launched the New York committee, held at the headquarters of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (ACTWU) in Manhattan, AIFLD's Executive Director William Doherty warned the gathering that the picture in El Salvador was more complex than it appeared. He warned that a lack of understanding of the Salvadoran situation might lead U.S. trade unionists to endorse Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries and thus weaken the democratic trade unions supported by AIFLD. [27]

The National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador.

Doherty's appeal failed to prevent the formation of the committee in New York. Moreover, the event prompted three nationally known union leaders to pioneer a National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador (NLC). The leaders were Jacob Sheinkman, then Secretary-Treasurer of ACTWU, William Winpisinger of the Machinists (IAM), and Douglas Fraser, President of the United Auto Workers (UAW). All three had been part of a dissident minority of trade union officials who had opposed the war in Vietnam.

The coming together of the three union leaders, joined later by a second wave of top union officials, was symptomatic of an ongoing ideological tension within the labour leadership in the U.S. Simply put, the majority of the trade union leaders in the U.S. were (and remain) loosely representative of two strains of social democracy which, until 1972, could be located in the remnants of the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. The roots of the antagonism pertained, for the most part, to attitudes towards Soviet Communism and U.S. foreign policy. On domestic issues the differences between these two strains were less obvious for reasons which are connected to the marginal position of social democracy in the U.S., particularly the absence of a mass social democratic or labour party, and numerous other factors.

The Socialist Party split over Vietnam into two groupings. In 1972, the left of the Party around intellectual Michael Harrington supported the McGovern candidacy, believing, among other things, that U.S. military force was not the best method to combat Communism. The right of the Party supported the Senators Hubert Humphrey and Edmund Muskie who supported the war effort, believing that the overriding priority was to support a firm anti-Communist foreign policy. The left grouping formed the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) which later became the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The right formed Social Democrats U.S.A. (SDUSA). [25]

In the early 1970s SDUSA members became key actors in the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM) which situated itself on the right of the Democratic Party and in opposition to the McGovern liberals. Their base of support extended to the AFL-CIO, and particularly the international affairs apparatus. SDUSA operatives became part of the DIA, AIFLD, and the other regional organs of AFL-CIO foreign policy, merging comfortably with the old Cold Warriors of the Lovestone-Brown tradition.

The somewhat larger DSA retained its base in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. They too had influence in the trade unions, particularly the UAW. The founding members of the NLC had all identified with DSA, which was more open to the positions of the Socialist International. The DSA, however, retained a distinct opposition to Stalinism characteristic of the Max Shactman and his followers and the

Socialist Party. [29] They differed, however, in the sense that SDUSA saw the U.S. Government as a progressive force in international affairs because of its anti-communism, while DSA opposed U.S. intervention, primarily because they viewed the U.S. Government's international role as imperialistic to the extent that it inflamed national liberation struggles which later degenerated into Stalinism. [30]

The NLC was formed in September 1981. Its first act was to send a letter to Congress announcing its opposition to military aid to El Salvador and to the U.S. military presence in the country. [31] Unlike many of the city-based committees that eventually emerged, the NLC reflected the DSA's manifest unwillingness to support the FMLN, the component factions of which had openly declared themselves to be Marxist-Leninist. However, the NLC's opposition to military aid to El Salvador separated them from the official position of the AFL-CIO which earlier in 1981 stated that military aid "should be conditioned on reciprocal actions to bring domestic violence under control and to institute democratic reforms that improve the conditions of workers." [32]

In early 1982 the three-person NLC invited other union leaders to join them on the Committee. By March 1982 the number of top union officials on the NLC had grown to 11. The new recruits were Kenneth Brown, President of the Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU); Cesar Chavez, President, United Farm Workers of America (UFWA); Nicholas Gyory, President, United Hatters Cap and Millinary Workers (a

union which later merged with ACTWU); Robert Goss, President, Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW); Frank Martino, President, International Chemical Workers Union (ICWU); Willard McGuire, President, National Education Association (NEA); Charles Perlick, President, The Newspaper Guild and Murray Finlay, President of ACTWU. [33] That same month, the NLC and the New York Labor Committee took out a paid advertisement in the New York Times which declared, "There is no democracy in El Salvador. What exists in a government at war with its own people. And that war is being supported and financed by the United States." [34]

The formation of the eleven-person NLC, supported by a handful of city-based trade union committees, constituted the organisational embryo of the anti-intervention movement in the U.S. trade unions. Supplementary features would develop as time progressed, but the 1980-83 period saw the gradual expansion of the NLC and the city-based committees from their early base. The city-based committees focused on passing anti-intervention resolutions at their union locals, district councils, and, where feasible, state and national conventions. These activities were complemented by educational forums, slide-shows, petitions, etc.

From the outset the NLC was devoid of normal committee formalities such as regular meeting dates and functioning officers. As a result organisational and political impetus often came from below, that is, from the city committees. An important figure in this arrangement was David Dyson, the head

of the political action ("Union Label") department at ACTWU's headquarters in New York. Dyson, operating under Sheinkman's supervision, became the coordinator of the NLC and its liaison to the city committees. Normally the local committees communicated to the NLC through Dyson's office, and, in turn, Dyson, combining NLC work with other ACTWU duties, advised the committees as to the level of political energy among NLC members at any given moment. The city committees frequently espoused support for the FMLN and the FSLN, a position not shared by the union leaders who comprised the NLC. From the outset the city committees regarded the anti-intervention stance of the union leaders on the NLC as a means of advancing and legitimising their own, perhaps stronger, positions. (See below, this chapter)

Perhaps the most controversial anti-intervention activity during this period was the periodic invitations from local activists to unionists in El Salvador and Nicaragua to visit the U.S. to address union audiences. AIFLD and the DIA alleged that the visiting unionists represented unions or federations that were overtly or covertly affiliated to the pro-Soviet World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and had links to the armed left in Central America. Therefore, they argued, official AFL-CIO opposition to these tours needed to be implacable. (See below, this chapter.)

Contingents of anti-intervention unionists also visited Central America. By the end of 1983 a number of such tours had occurred involving both the NLC and local activists.

These tours played a highly significant role in deepening anti-intervention sentiment in the unions and stimulating further activities. More important, perhaps, was the relationships forged between the anti-intervention unionists and Left trade unions in El Salvador and Nicaragua. By 1986-87 a clear majority of the hundreds of U.S. union activists who prioritised Central America work in their locals or their union offices had visited the region. The political consequences of these connections is difficult to evaluate in any precise fashion. The propaganda effect of first-hand experience and of building personal ties with trade unionists in Central America are factors which, nonetheless, penetrated every aspect of the struggle over Central America inside the U.S. trade unions.

Anti-intervention work within individual unions faced greater obstacles and generally took a longer time to gather momentum. Activists on the city committees were frequently isolated within their own unions and this seriously impaired their ability to organise internally. On the city committees activists usually worked with like-minded activists from other unions, not their own. It was likely that anti-interventionists in the same union were also geographically very dispersed, making concerted intra-union work logistically difficult. However, certain unions progressed more quickly than others, and by the end of 1983 intra-union anti-intervention caucuses had begun to appear.

All told, the organisational structures and the political activity of the anti-intervention movement in U.S. trade unions had become fairly developed by the end of 1983. As for the political character of the movement, this would assume a constant state of flux. From the start the political dynamic most in evidence consisted of a working understanding between two quite distinct positions. On the one hand, the city committees, with one or two notable exceptions (such as New York), adopted positions of solidarity with the revolutionary forces of the region, choosing not to be publicly critical of the Sandinista Front or the FMLN and sympathising with their stated objectives. On the other hand were the non-intervention forces comprised of the NLC and a minority of activists involved in the city committees. The non-interventionists were implacably opposed to U.S. intervention but stopped short of endorsing the FMLN and the Sandinistas.

Thus the working understanding between the self-named "solidarity" and "non-intervention" forces (as they will be referred to hereafter) rested on a shared opposition to U.S. intervention, and not on unqualified or even critical support for the Sandinistas or the FMLN. Amongst the non-intervention forces, feelings about the revolutionary movements in Central America ranged from mildly supportive to very critical. Thus, the NLC had rejected the "conditionality" principle of the AFL-CIO and stood out against military aid to El Salvador but distanced themselves from the guerillas. However, some

national union leaders, and Dyson in his role as NLC coordinator, had been involved in political discussions with leaders of the FDR, namely Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora, during their visits to New York City. As radical Christian democrats and social democrats the FDR leaders were politically more acceptable to the NLC than the Marxist-Leninist FMLN.

As Nicaragua and the U.S. backed contra insurgency received more attention the NLC's politics became more problematical. The NLC was "in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador"; who, the question would be asked, were the defenders of these values in Nicaragua? There was little controversy within the AFL-CIO over the Salvadoran right, but the Sandinistas were a more contentious subject. AIFLD's dossiers on the Sandinistas became more condemnatory as time progressed and the NLC for a whole period fell within the gravitational pull of AIFLD's argument that the Sandinistas were totalitarian communists. NLC support for the Sandinistas, so long as AIFLD's view remained unchallenged, was therefore even less likely than NLC support for the FMLN. At least the left in El Salvador were the targets of repression (not even AIFLD could deny this), while the left in Nicaragua was, according to AIFLD, its main perpetrators.

Activity, Controversy, and Self-Analysis.

During 1982 a highly visible controversy over Central America broke out in the Screen Actors Guild (SAG). The central character in the controversy was actor and Guild President Ed Asner, then star of the popular television series, Lou Grant. Asner became an early supporter of the NLC (although never a member) but had also served as a director of Medical Aid to El Salvador (MAES), an organisation active in raising funds for the FDR-FMLN for the construction of clinics in the areas of El Salvador under their control ("zones of control"). For his support of MAES Asner became the target of a series of right-wing attacks, including death threats. Conservative groups threatened to boycott goods advertised during the Lou Grant show; three companies withdrew their sponsorship and CBS cancelled the program. [35]

Fellow actor Charlton Heston attacked Asner in a meeting of 250 SAG members in Hollywood in February 1982. Asner was soon to retire as SAG President and had nominated Patti Duke to succeed him. Heston, a conservative opinion leader in Hollywood endorsed Ed Nelson who accused the Asner-Duke supporters of being "Reagan-haters and neosocialists". David Dyson, coordinator of the NLC, wrote to Sheinkman urging that the NLC support Asner. "One of the main points that Heston and Co. are making," wrote Dyson, "is that Asner's position is out of step with American labor...I believe that supporting him (Asner) in a tangible way at this time would help to

underscore our position that American trade union leaders have a right and responsibility to speak out on El Salvador." [36] Duke went on to win the SAG presidency. [37]

The SAG controversy might be considered too distant from the trade union mainstream to be considered typical. Although partially true, it is worth remembering that the SAG has historically provided a unique barometer of the political mood in the U.S. at certain junctures. Hollywood liberals and left-wingers sent ambulances to the Spanish Republic and following World War Two John Wayne and Ronald Reagan were among those who helped cement a Cold War grip on the film industry. During Vietnam, actress Jane Fonda made a controversial visit to Hanoi. The Asner episode, therefore, had its own place in the peculiar history of Hollywood politics as well as the anti-intervention movement itself. [38]

A more typical if less widely publicised controversy involved Central American unionists on speaking tours of the U.S. In April, 1983, a representative of the left Salvadoran federation, FENASTRAS, touched some sensitive nerves in the AFL-CIO. In March an unsigned letter was circulated to numerous union locals which asserted that FENASTRAS only represented 3,000 workers, and that the visiting unionist, Alejandro Molina Lara, was in a union with only 20 members. There were, however, more serious accusations: "Lara is clever. Touring this country speaking at every labor organization he can get in to. Raising money on the pretext

of helping the workers and peasants. The money is actually used for guns." The letter continued, "Lara is an interloper - terrorist - commandante of the Resistencia National (sic)...He is a known kidnapper and assassin...Lara and his group are worse than the PLO." This open attack on the FENASTRAS member was circulated by the AFL-CIO's field representative for Region 8, Edward Collins. [39] Weeks later AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland delivered a more oblique attack on Molina Lara. Kirkland informed all Principal Officers and Local Central Bodies of the AFL-CIO that Molina Lara did "not represent a trade union organization with which the AFL-CIO is working with and which is affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). I believe he has addressed some trade union meetings, presenting a position or policy contrary to that of the AFL-CIO convention. It is regrettable that this took place." [40]

Several central labour bodies ignored Kirkland's objections and six Bay Area councils of the AFL-CIO publicly condemned the letter. [38] The newly-formed Labor Committee on El Salvador in Santa Clara County responded to Kirkland in its broadsheet, Labor Perspective on Central America, which commented, "It is instructive to note that this vicious red-baiting pre-dated and perhaps prescribed a Lane Kirkland response." [42] Charles Dee, Executive Board member of AFT Local 212 in Milwaukee registered a written complaint against Kirkland which generated a response from DIA Director Irving Brown. [43] Brown advised Dee that "unions can become

instruments for political forces that attempt to overthrow dictatorships...but when representatives of these forces come to power, they proceed to destroy the very trade union rights that they claimed to defend. We have seen this in Cuba, and now we see it in Nicaragua." It was imperative, wrote Brown, that the AFL-CIO have no contact with such elements. [44] William Doherty responded to a similar written protest from the President of the San Jose Federation of Teachers, Forrest Nixon. Nixon had been informed that the accusations against Molina Lara had originated from the DIA or AIFLD and he requested that the claims be supported by solid documentation. [45] Brown passed the complaint to AIFLD. [46] Doherty informed Nixon that the left federation FENASTRAS was a guerilla front and that the federation deserving support was the UPD, which was a militant and dedicated supporter of peaceful change. [47]

The condemnatory statements made by Doherty, Brown and Kirkland in this case and others that were to follow did not simply target the visiting trade unionists. Those who extended the invitations were also targeted for criticism. As Brown described it, "We (the DIA) have been noticing...that all sorts of committees have been created for diverse purposes." These groups, wrote Brown, "raise funds for purposes for which we are not certain will be served in the spirit in which they claim. It is therefore important that the AFL-CIO be extremely careful in the way we develop our relationships with other trade union organizations." [48]

Brown's message was reiterated in the April edition of Free Trade Union News. A letter from a leading official of the AIFLD-supported Salvadoran construction workers' federation (FESINCONSTRANS) referred to certain Salvadoran trade unionists who, having been persecuted for their trade union activities or "possibly because of their bad luck of being involved in the indiscriminate campaign of terror that is plaguing our country (were now) taking advantage of the political freedom offered to them in the United States." These unionists, he suggested, had their own Marxist-Leninist agenda. [49]

The unfolding challenge to the AFL-CIO's Central America policy prompted Brown to organise a one-day conference on international affairs in San Francisco at the end of 1982. Anti-interventionism had made considerable headway in the trade unions of the Bay Area and the objective of the DIA-sponsored event was to meet the challenge head on. The 100 trade unionists in attendance reportedly gave Brown a hostile reception. One source quoted Brown as saying, "I think some of the people on the other side have been working on them. If I were the Communists, that's what I would do." [50]

In April 1983 anti-interventionists held their own San Francisco conference with 200 attending. The conference, hosted by Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 9410, was addressed by IAM President, William Winpisinger. The Machinists' leader launched a scathing attack on Reagan and

the multinationals. "I'll be damned," said Winpisinger, "if workers should send their sons to support Texas Instruments in El Salvador." [51]

A substantial segment of the West Coast solidarity forces met in San Jose, California, in early 1983 to discuss and analyse their anti-intervention work. At this point the centres of support were still Seattle and San Francisco on the West Coast and New York and Boston on the East Coast. Progress had been made but the growth in support consisted mainly in an increase in statements, endorsements, and resolutions made by union officials or official union bodies. One written contribution to the discussion noted, "Rarely have we penetrated deeply into the membership of these unions, generating the kind of support needed to obtain significant material help for solidarity campaigns." Some activists, the writer observed, were part of the solidarity component of the CA/AIM first, and the union movement second. Others were principally union activists with only tenuous links to the solidarity network. The task, the activists agreed, was to develop a genuine internationalist trend in the trade unions and, where possible, build support for the FDR-FMLN and the FSLN. [52]

The San Jose gathering agreed that the material basis for trade union internationalism had clearly emerged in recent years. Nearly every resolution opposing intervention in Central America had made reference to runaway shops, cuts in domestic social spending and government or government-inspired

attacks on unions both in North an Central America. Interestingly, however, it remained obvious that most anti-intervention activity in the unions was taking place in regions where the 1980-81 recession was proving to be less enduring, that is, in the metropolitan areas on the eastern and western seaboards. Where the scars of recession had remained stubbornly open, such as the industrial midwest, the anti-intervention movement in the unions was thin on the ground. Worker protests against runaway shops and other plant closures, where they had occurred, had sometimes been channeled into campaigns for trade protection from cheap imports. [53] On other occasions community-labour struggles against "shutdowns" had shown a growing awareness of the international economic relationships which underscored their immediate predicament. [54] The evidence nevertheless suggested that an internationalist trend would not automatically emerge from workers involved in a direct brush with the changing international division of labour. Put another way, the anti-intervention movement might express internationalist conclusions inspired by the changed or changing economic realities facing workers in the U.S., but the movement itself did not flow directly from those conditions. Trade unionists who had made Central America an issue for the labour movement were for the most part not themselves victims of the "global assembly line" or its negative knock-on effects, although this and similar notions were located at the centre of their propaganda.

A partial exception to this rule was evident in the case of the public sector. Trade unions such as AFSCME and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) had a clear material reason to oppose U.S. intervention because the federal government's military budget had already been expanded to the detriment of domestic social programs. Anti-intervention writers Cohen and Rodgers estimated the cost of the U.S. military presence in Central America to be $3.2 billion between 1981 and 1985 and the total "military / security" cost to be as high as $9.5 billion annually. They calculated that, "If spent otherwise the $9.5 billion...could have restored the combined cuts in Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, child nutrition and vocational education programs, Low income energy assistance, Medicaid, social services block grants and Guaranteed Student Loans; or more than matched the $9.2 billion that was cut from Social Security; or the $6.8 billion cut from unemployment insurance; or the $5.4 billion cut from Medicare. [55] Despite this highly palpable connection between the material interests of public sector workers (and, of course, prospective welfare recipients) and the cost of intervention in Central America it remained true that, in the main, the activists emphasising this connection were veterans of the movement which opposed the war in Vietnam, whose opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America was founded on moral and political rather than economic concerns. [56]

It had become clear that anti-interventionists had acquired a more substantial base in white-collar unions than they had achieved in the recession-hit industrial unions. As a general trend it seemed that the anti-intervention movement was culturally, geographically, and experientially removed from the direct traumas of plant closures and other recession-related misfortunes. However, instances did arise where negative economic developments fed more directly into the arguments against the Central America policy of the Administration. For examples, the Santa Clara County Committee on El Salvador compiled a list of closures in the county and linked this to the broader issue of runaway shops. Therefore, "those of us who worked at Ford, Glorietta, or Atari have a common interest with the workers of Central America in their fight...Our answer is not to compete to win a diminishing number of jobs but to build a genuine unity worldwide." [57] In June 1983 the midwest regional conference of ACTWU in Springfield, Illinois, adopted a resolution which attacked "American based business interests" for "funding and supporting the conditions that prevailed in El Salvador." The resolution called for the withdrawal of U.S. corporations from the country. [58]

The steady growth of anti-interventionism in the trade unions suggested that, while many activists were primarily concerned with supporting the revolutionary struggles in Central America, they had successfully broadened their base of support by emphasising topical trade union concerns such

as federal cuts in social programs and the flight of manufacturing jobs to low-wage areas.

The West Coast Tour.

In October 1983 a three-person delegation from Central America arrived in the U.S. for a five-week tour of the West Coast. The delegation consisted of a representative from the Salvadoran teachers union (ANDES), a Guatamalan trade unionist, and, finally, a high-ranking official from the Sandinista Workers Central (CST). The presence of the CST representative, Sebastian Castro (who was imprisoned nine times by Somoza), marked the first time that U.S. trade unionists had hosted a visit from the main Sandinista federation.

The visitors addressed union audiences in all the major West Coast cities and made presentations at the California AFSCME and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) state conventions. According to the tour organisers an aggregate audience of 6,000 came into contact with the three representatives. In addition, hundreds of union locals endorsed the tour. [59] The tour constituted a major political and organisational advance for the West Coast city-committees, who had begun to operate under the title Labor Network on Central America. The movement on the West Coast had acquired a higher degree of organisational cohesion than had been achieved on the East Coast and other regions in the U.S.

But the tour did not pass without protest. One of its endorsers, the Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees (BRAC), Seattle Cascade Lodge 1380, complained that "some of our members were confused and extremely displeased by the speeches given by these individuals (who made) purely political speeches and anti-U.S. Government statements." The Lodge withdrew its endorsement. [60] After an investigation the vice-president of the union, J.F. Otero, informed AIFLD: "We found that several of these people operating in the U.S. are listed as the U.S. branches of the CPUSTAL, the Latin American branch of the WFTU." Referring to the Central Americans, Otero remarked, "They pulled no punches. Their presentation was like a recording of speeches I've heard before by professional operatives of the Communist Party in Latin America." Otero was confident the three were "agents of the WFTU," and expressed regret that the tour had been given legitimacy by BRAC, "due to the ignorance and stupidity of our leadership of those locals." [61]

Another criticism of the tour was of a different nature. Activist John Hess, the coordinator of the segment of the tour covering the Bay Area, referred to "significant differences in style, rhetoric, and class background between the white/left solidarity movement and the labor movement...very few uninitiated union members attended the events; they were primarily solidarity rallies." [62]

The Strength of Union Anti-Interventionism.

At the beginning of 1983 the NLC had eleven national union officials on its letterhead with more than a dozen city-based committees affiliated to the parent committee. At a time when the differences between AIFLD, the DIA, and the Reagan Administration over Central America were difficult to detect, the NLC's opposition to the Administration was becoming more pronounced. The NLC's coordinator David Dyson expressed this opposition in a written attack on Assistant Secretary of State, Elliot Abrams. On February 9 Abrams had praised El Salvador's steps towards democracy and the containment of the death squads. On the same day Dyson and the New York Labor Committee had met with the FENASTRAS representative Molina Lara who described El Salvador in quite different terms. Dyson advised Abrams, "Your statistics look good only because the (Salvadoran) government is running out of people to kill. To assert that El Salvador is becoming more democratic is to cynically flaunt the truth." Moreover, wrote Dyson, present trade union anti-interventionism had already surpassed the level of union opposition to the Vietnam war, "both organizationally and in terms of preparedness." [63]

The number of union locals and regional union organisations that had registered opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador had doubled since the height of the repression in 1981. In addition, a dozen major unions had recorded either partial or total opposition to U.S. policy in

Central America. The AFL-CIO unions in this category were ACTWU, AFSCME, IAM, International Woodworkers of America (IWA), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), SAG, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and the UAW. Non-AFL-CIO unions opposed to U.S. policy included the National Education Association (NEA), the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE), the Newspaper Guild, and the ILWU. Furthermore, 12 AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils had publicly opposed U.S. intervention in El Salvador, five of them in California.

The national unions with a history of CPUSA leadership, such as the UE and ILWU, had also opposed the Vietnam War (although their size had declined since). Moreover, the UAW's opposition to intervention in Central America at first glance appeared consistent with its foreign policy orientation established under Reuther's leadership, that is, somewhat to the left of the AFL-CIO's mainstream. However, the UAW's opposition to intervention frequently made reference to the plight of the auto industry, the changing international division of labour and to the political attacks of the Reagan Administration on the labour movement. In other words, UAW opposition to intervention in Central America bore a different character to its opposition to the war in Vietnam. [64]

Perhaps the real breakthrough for the anti-interventionists was measured by the stance of the white collar and service sector unions whose numbers continued to increase in proportion to the old craft and industrial unions.

By changing the composition of organised labour, it appeared that economic recession and restructuring had made its own contribution to anti-interventionism. The decline of private-sector trade unionism in manufacturing and construction had reduced the size, strength, and political influence of the more conservative union leaderships and thus amplified the voices of frequently more liberal leaderships of the service and white collar unions. [65]

June 1983: The NLC tour of El Salvador.

In June 1983 the NLC sent a delegation to El Salvador. The significance of the visit should not be missed. Indeed, the delegation described itself as the first independent trade union fact-finding contingent to visit the country, that is, the first tour of union leaders not organised by AIFLD and the DIA. The delegation consisted of seven union officials, five from AFL-CIO unions. From ACTWU came Sheinkman and Dyson, accompanied by the black secretary-treasurer of AFSCME, William Lucy and his deputy, John Howard. Two officials from the non-Federation NEA and a regional director of the UAW also made the trip.

The report of the visit, entitled El Salvador: Labor, Terror, and Peace, was unambiguously critical of U.S. government policy. U.S. military intervention, it argued, threatened to draw the U.S. into a new Vietnam. Furthermore, the U.S. Government was criticised for pursuing policies to

boost private-sector confidence in El Salvador to offset economic collapse which, declared the report, was being achieved at the expense of human and trade union rights. The report cited findings of the legal aid office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, Tutela Legal, which had documented 1,500 political assassinations in the first half of 1983. It also contrasted the economic hardship facing the Salvadoran working class with the "economic free ride" handed to U.S. multinationals in the form of tax exemptions and other benefits of the free trade zones established in the country as an invitation to foreign investors. [66]

Significantly, the report made the U.S. government and U.S. corporations the principal targets of criticism. AIFLD received only one inconsequential mention, which indicated that the NLC was reluctant to criticise official AFL-CIO policy in the region. Nevertheless, the NLC had made a clear departure from traditional AIFLD and DIA positions. For example, the report dropped the customary distinction between "legitimate" AIFLD-sponsored unions and "illegitimate" Left formations such as ANDES and FENASTRAS. Both moderate and radical wings of Salvadoran labour were accorded equal status and attention. Moreover, repression against unionists received greater emphasis than was the case with AIFLD, and the report echoed none of AIFLD's condemnations of the FMLN. The NLC's report focussed on the economic as well as the military dimensions of U.S. intervention. The AFL-CIO had for most of the postwar period considered the activities of U.S.

multinationals to be beneficial both to U.S. and host nation workers. As discussed in Chapter One, during the late 1950s the AFL-CIO called for a Marshall Plan for Latin America and greater U.S. investment. Since then the character of U.S. foreign investment had taken a clear shift away from selling goods to the so-called developing world. U.S. corporations were now increasingly servicing the U.S. market from facilities abroad. A generally beneficial situation for U.S. workers had, therefore, turned into its opposite.

The NLC report represented a synthesised expression of several important developments unfolding in and around the U.S. trade unions - political, economic, and intellectual - culminating into a clear challenge (rhetorical at least) to the ideological tenets that had sustained AFL-CIO foreign policy for several decades. Reagan's attacks, the role of the multinationals, the openness to interaction with the Left trade unions in El Salvador amounted to the emergence of a fairly distinct left-liberal strain in U.S. trade union foreign policy. The appearance of the NLC's report meant that the anti-intervention movement had, therefore, reached an important juncture in its political development.

Expanding the Foreign Policy Role of the AFL-CIO: The Kissinger Commission and the National Endowment for Democracy.

The publication of the NLC's report in July 1983 coincided with the national convention of the International

Longshoreman's Association (ILA) in Miami, Florida. Of the major AFL-CIO unions, the ILA had been perhaps the most firm supporter of the Vietnam war. Its leader, Thomas Gleason, received personal thanks from former President Nixon for his part in organising a counter-demonstration to a major anti-war protest in New York City in 1970. The anti-war demonstration was violently dispersed by contingents of Teamsters, construction and maritime workers, and ILA members. [67]

Ronald Reagan addressed the 1983 ILA convention. Reagan's appearance itself testified to the prevailing conservatism of the ILA leadership and the President quipped that the acronym ILA actually stood for "I Love America". The President announced plans to establish a National Bipartisan Commission on Central America upon which Lane Kirkland would serve as representative of the trade union movement under the chairmanship Dr. Henry A. Kissinger. That President Reagan chose a union audience to announce an important initiative pertaining to U.S. foreign policy indicated, perhaps, that the Administration was aware that its Central America policy was causing a major controversy in the labour movement, one that might irreparably damage the AFL-CIO's international participation in the Cold War.

Almost three-quarters of Reagan's 75-minute speech consisted of an attack on the Sandinistas. Allegedly with Soviet-Cuban support, the Sandinistas were "encouraging a war to subjugate another nation to communism; that nation is El Salvador." Reagan accused the Sandinistas of harassing trade

unions; the longshoremen's union at the Port of Corinto had reportedly tried to affiliate to the AFL-CIO-supported federation, the CUS, but had been prevented from doing so. This complaint was taken up by the ICFTU and presented to the ILO. [68]

The intensification of the Administration's anti-Sandinista rhetoric coincided with a similar intensification by the DIA and AIFLD. In April the DIA's Free Trade Union News ran a front page article under the headline "The Sandinistas: Menace to Democracy" which articulated the same accusations made by Reagan before the ILA several weeks later. The Sandinistas were accused of attempting to "foment revolution" beyond their borders and had turned the Nicaraguan people into "enslaved subjects". On the question of Nicaragua Reagan, the Department of State and the DIA now spoke with one voice. [69]

The status and situation of non-Sandinista unions in Nicaragua had also attracted the attention of human rights groups and the U.N.'s International Labor Organization (ILO), although the latter received its information direct from the ICFTU and ORIT within which AIFLD and the AFL-CIO exerted great influence. However, Amnesty International (AI) in a Congressional statement made in September 1983 indicated that 15 members of the pro-Soviet federation CAUS had been prosecuted in October 1981 under the emergency law for staging illegal strikes and factory occupations. (The ban on strikes had been introduced one month earlier). In its 1984 report,

however, AI said it was "unaware of any trade unionists having been detained or prosecuted (under the provisions of the emergency decree)." [70] AI therefore appeared to accept as valid the Sandinista explanation that actions were taken against individual trade unionists for counter-revolutionary activity, noting that, "Charges were generally reported to be based on allegations of collaboration with violent opposition groups or involvement in specific acts of sabotage and terrorism within the terms of the public order law." [71] Americas Watch reached a similar conclusion in its 1984 report. However, AI, Americas Watch and the ILO all identified a pattern of short term arrests of union members in Nicaragua during 1982. [72]

The issue of the Sandinista's treatment of unions made the argument against intervention vulnerable in certain respects. The behaviour of the Sandinistas, therefore, had become an important variable in the struggle over Central America in the U.S. trade unions. However, U.S. efforts to destabilise Nicaragua, politically, economically, and, as was becoming increasingly apparent, militarily, confirmed the upward trajectory of U.S. intervention in the region. Moreover, for a broad segment of anti-intervention opinion the Sandinista's trade union record was by no means the only important issue. The FSLN's commendable performance in the areas of health, literacy, women's rights, etc., should also be taken into account - trade union issues needed to be seen in the context of the revolutionary process as a whole. Taken

as a whole, the Sandinista's record set in sharp relief the reactionary character of U.S. intervention. The escalation of the attacks on Nicaragua therefore had the effect of creating further opportunities for anti-intervention work and strengthened the case against U.S. policy.

The participation of Lane Kirkland on the Kissinger Commission testified to the significance of the AFL-CIO in U.S. foreign policy. However, the importance of the AFL-CIO as an active agent in the international arena was conveyed somewhat more emphatically with the instigation of another Reagan project, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). This initiative was originally announced by President Reagan in a speech before the British Parliament in June 1982. Reagan urged that new political mechanisms needed to be installed to help fight communism in the countries of the developing world. In November 1983 the NED formally came into existence, describing itself as a "non-partisan, private, non-profit organization." [73] The initiative, however, would be funded entirely by the U.S. Government. The political strategy encapsulated by the NED rested on an awareness that the social and economic crisis in the developing countries created grievances that could not be ventilated through what might be understood as liberal democratic means of political expression. The absence of democratic institutions and traditions fostered beliefs that stable liberal democracy was an untenable goal; this led to the development of radical movements which later fell under the influence and ultimately

the control of communists. When this happened the U.S. could either intervene with military aid to prop up the old authoritarian regime, or it could allow the country to be "lost" to totalitarian communists. Given these unsatisfactory options the free world should help promote democratic values and assist in developing a democratic culture and infrastructure to exorcise the spectre of communism.

This "export of democracy" was viewed as an important dimension of pre-emptive or liberal intervention by Administration foreign policy makers. Such an approach had been advocated by the AFL-CIO throughout the postwar period. In 1971, for example, Irving Brown had suggested that "The U.S. should actively support democratic elements both morally and materially. We can counter the Communists' organizational and ideological offensive and at the same time improve the lives of the people of the third world." [74] Brown and the DIA believed that the U.S. Government had routinely tarnished the democratic ideals of the American revolution for the sake of expediency. Moreover, big business was too often interested in their own profits to be concerned with the liberty of others. As another AFL-CIO official expressed it, "commercial and banking interests...care only for the buck and don't know whether political democracy is a system worth defending." [75] The DIA regarded the labour movement to be the only reliable and authentic custodian of democratic values, one that was opposed to dictatorships of the left and the right.

In pioneering the NED, the Reagan Administration appeared to recognise the need to fight an ideological struggle against communism. In order to be successful, the political conditions which incubated communism - right wing dictatorship - needed to be changed. Revolutionary alternatives were only attractive when authoritarian regimes precluded any hope for genuine democratic reforms; the fall of Somoza and the rise of the Sandinistas was a case in point. Therefore U.S. foreign policy should do whatever it could to encourage political reforms and democratic practices. The U.S.'s uncritical support for right-wing dictatorships, therefore, could not continue. NED promised to facilitate what Kirkland, Brown, Gershman and others had claimed was needed all along, that is, "high-minded democratic forces" to develop "field cadres for democracy in the pit, on the shop floor, or in the workers' neighbourhoods. " [76]

The NED, therefore, appeared to reflect a significant shift on the part of the Reagan Administration away from support for "authoritarian" regimes solely on the grounds of their anti-communism, a policy that had been defended by the Administration's representative to the U.N., Jeane Kirkpatrick. The extent to which the Administration actually accepted the worth of the "ideological war" strategy, or payed lip-service to it for the purposes of making U.S. foreign policy appear more progressive in the eyes of Congressional and public opinion, remains uncertain. Either way, the NED was poised to make the AFL-CIO the U.S. Government's principal

weapon in the international struggle against communism. A statement issued by the NED remarked, "Of the American organizations working to promote democracy...only the labor movement has an established record in this field." [77]

The AFL-CIO's international network was at this point destined to receive more NED (i.e. U.S. Government) money than any other recipient. Of the $32 million original NED appropriation for 1984-85, 77% was allocated to the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI) which was established in 1978 as an arm of the DIA. [78]

Other organisations earmarked to receive NED funds included the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). One CIPE project concerned itself with promoting the relationship between private enterprise and democracy. Solidarnosc in Poland and the Afghan rebels would also be indirectly supported by NED funds. Freedom House, an SDUSA-influenced human rights group, would itself receive $200,000 to facilitate an information network "for democratic intellectuals and journalists...in both the developing and developed worlds." [79]

Congressional committees began to question the wisdom of Project Democracy when it was first aired in February 1983. Foreign governments, it was feared, might dismiss it as an interventionist propaganda program. A review of the NED by a U.S. Government agency, the General Accounting Office (GAO), expressed concern that the "appropriate interface" between NED and the State Department had yet to be established. Exactly

what might be appropriate or inappropriate remained unexplained. The GAO report conveyed intentions that the "pattern of close cooperation with U.S. agencies that the business community has had over the years will continue," but a FTUI official reported that "since the AFL-CIO has been functioning abroad for years, the Institute (FTUI) will not require advice on its operations with the State Department." [80]

Indeed, the FTUI had already decided the main item on its agenda. NED money would be used to pursue Cold War unionism, specifically to counter the influence of the "the central organization involved in the global struggle against free labor" - the WFTU. [81] In Latin America alone 22 federations had affiliated to CPUSTAL, the regional arm of the Prague-based Federation. [82]

The fact that the AFL-CIO was scheduled to receive the bulk of NED funds testified to the relative effectiveness and reputation of the AFL-CIO's international activities. The Administration's active shift towards the type of pre-emptive intervention advocated by the AFL-CIO for several decades was further confirmed in the appointment of Carl Gershman as President of the Board of NED in April, 1983. In 1975 Gershman had authored a book on AFL-CIO foreign policy which praised the international activities of the AFL-CIO and the principles which inspired its involvement. [83] Gershman had also been chairman of the AFL-CIO's A.Philip Randolph Institute (a stronghold of SDUSA) and served as an aide to the

Reagan Administration's representative to the U.N., Jeane Kirkpatrick.

The arrival of the NED highlighted an important paradox. At a time when the AFL-CIO's international activity was becoming more prominent as the result of new foreign policy initiatives on the part of the Administration, criticism within the AFL-CIO of Federation and U.S. Government foreign policy had never been so sustained and widespread. Moreover, if Gershmans's appointment illustrated perfectly the renewed significance of the AFL-CIO's international perspective to U.S. foreign policy, the presence of Kirkland and AFT president Albert Shanker on the NED Board alongside right-wingers such as Senator Orrin Hatch testified to the distance some union leaders put between the domestic concerns of their members and their own international affairs agenda. Hatch had been in the forefront of the political offensive against U.S. labour referred to above. This offensive, many believed, had undermined the four-decade social pact between labour and government representatives.

Throughout most of 1984, however, NED and the FTUI's main political battles were not to be waged against the pernicious influence of international communism. Rather, the stiffest resistance to the "export of democracy" came from the U.S. Congress. The $31 million appropriation for NED was seriously jeopardised when the New York Times disclosed that NED funds entrusted to the AFL-CIO had been used to influence the result of a March 1984 general election in Panama.

Furthermore, the funds were reportedly used in the campaign of the military-supported candidate, Nicholas Barletta, who defeated the populist-nationalist Arnulfo Arias by less than 2,000 votes in a poll of 700,000. The Times cited a cable sent by the U.S. Ambassador in Panama Everett Briggs to the State Department, which read, "It would be embarrassing to the U.S. if the labor institute's (AIFLD's) use of Endowment funds to support one side of Panama's elections became public knowledge. The Ambassador requests that this project be discontinued before the U.S. Government is further compromised in Panama." [84] The FTUI's explanation confirmed that the Republic of Panama Workers' Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Republica de Panama -CTRP) had asked AIFLD for "help in holding pre-election voter education seminars and labor rallies that would be independent of those which had traditionally included Communist unions." [85]

The incident of alleged interference in the closely-fought Panamanian elections clearly affected the tone of the House debate on NED funding. Fears were expressed regarding the accountability of NED; the whole project operated outside the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) because NED was technically a non-Government entity which thus precluding public access to NED documents normally ensured by FOIA. [86] Those who defended NED stressed the pre-emptive reform perspective: spending money on non-military aid now would help prevent military intervention at some future stage. Nevertheless, the House voted to quash the $31 million

appropriation to the NED. The Senate, however, resurrected the NED and allocated $11 million to the AFL-CIO's FTUI in 1984 and $13.8 million in 1985. Therefore, throughout 1984 and 1985 AIFLD (effectively the FTUI's vehicle in Central America) received a major cash injection for its work in Central America which increased its overall impact on the political situation in Nicaragua particularly. This impact was compounded by other non-union related NED projects which were used to intensify the propaganda war against the Sandinistas. (See Chapters Six and Eight)

The significance of AIFLD's involvement in the Panamanian elections was almost completely overlooked by anti-interventionists. It was only later revealed that AIFLD had helped the CIA to get Barletta elected in order to preserve the power base of Manuel Noriega as head of the military. When the Boland amendment cut off Congressional aid to the contras in December 1982 top Reagan Administration officials chose to supply the contras by other means. Noriega reportedly became a key player in the contra's "covert war" against Nicaragua despite his known connections to the infamously brutal Medellin cocaine cartel and his assassination of political opponents. AIFLD-NED support for Barletta therefore stood in total contradiction to the objectives of pre-emptive reform and the "export of democracy." According to these stated objectives NED money and AIFLD support should have fallen behind Arias, the civilian candidate who pledged to reform the military and

fight drug corruption. However, from the point of view of the CIA, NED, and presumably AIFLD, Noriega's part in the war against Nicaragua took priority over any progress towards democracy in Panama. To cap it all, Barletta's election victory was later in 1984 revealed to be a complete fraud engineered by the Noriega-controlled Election Commission. [87]

Even before the full story of Panama became apparent it was clear that NED and AIFLD, in their activities against the Sandinistas, were involved not in pre-emptive reform against an authoritarian right-wing government but a counter-revolutionary intervention against what they perceived to be a totalitarian or near-totalitarian regime. Furthermore, it should be noted that in practice the "export of democracy" model of intervention was not intended to replace military intervention. The hostility of the U.S. Government to revolutionary regimes had elsewhere seen the CIA assist the military campaigns of counter-revolutionary groups such as the contras in Nicaragua and the FNLA and UNITA in Angola. Thus it became difficult, by any objective measure, to view the NED project, ergo the international activities of the AFL-CIO, as entirely separate from the CIA's policy of armed covert war against countries such as Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua. And yet, AIFLD and the DIA presented themselves as the defenders of true democracy in the face of Sandinista harassment, frequently evading the charge that Sandinista harassment, where it existed, might be in some way connected to the U.S. supported contra insurgency.

The connection between AIFLD's work and U.S. military activity was dramatically confirmed in the autumn of 1983 when a U.S. and Caribbean invasion force landed in Grenada. After the invasion it was revealed that AIFLD had played an active role in opposing the Government of Maurice Bishop. Following the fall of the right-wing regime of Eric Gairy in 1979, AIFLD reportedly funded the Seamen and Waterfront Workers Union (SWWU) which, according to one source, instigated "serious disruptions on the waterfront and at the utility companies to destabilize and, possibly, to bring down the Peoples Revolutionary Government." After the invasion the Grenadian Chamber of Commerce invited AIFLD to help "rebuild" the Grenadian trade unions and to turn them into an authentic "free and democratic" movement. According to one source, this began when SWWU members were payed in cash to erase the slogans of the Grenadian revolution from the walls and billboards of the island. [88] As this news penetrated the anti-intervention trade union circles, many feared that AIFLD's designs for the Nicaraguan labour movement, should a U.S. invasion result, were being rehearsed on a Caribbean island under U.S. military occupation.

The Kissinger Report and the AFL-CIO.

The Kissinger Report was published in early 1984. [89] The Kissinger Commission itself was widely perceived to be an attempt to re-establish the postwar bipartisan consensus on

foreign policy which crashed on the rocks of the Vietnam debacle and the political inquest that followed the fall of Saigon. Kissinger had already indicated that the Commission's imperative was to avoid a repeat of the "bitter debate" of that period. [90] Indeed, aspects of the Administration's Central America policy had suffered setbacks in Congress during 1982-83 when so-called Congressional liberals and moderates voted to cut by half the Administration's request for military aid to El Salvador. Furthermore, the House of Representatives had voted on two occasions to discontinue funding the Nicaraguan contras. The Boland Amendment of December 1982 expressly limited the role of CIA actions against Nicaragua, although by April 1983 Congressman Boland expressed concern that the CIA had been ignoring this directive. [91] Many in Congress were uneasy about "covert action" and dissatisfied with a policy which contained no proposals to deal with the underlying economic and social problems of the region, problems that were unlikely to be addressed by military intervention alone. The Kissinger Commission, therefore, needed to address indigenous factors as well as perceived Soviet-Cuban expansion if a genuinely bipartisan policy was to be formulated.

Lane Kirkland accepted his invitation to serve on the Commission without reservations. The AFL-CIO had always advocated bipartisanship in foreign policy; this should be preserved no matter how conflictual relations may be between labour, capital, and the state in the domestic arena. Of

course, the political and economic situation which underscored the postwar social accord were such that serious conflict in the domestic arena did not emerge or, if it did, it was mainly managed and regulated by the established industrial relations machinery. Whether Kirkland liked it or not, the collapse of the pact and the attacks on the labour movement led to questions being raised regarding the AFL-CIO's cooperation with the Administration in the area of foreign policy.

Kirkland's participation on the Commission sent a shudder of concern throughout the active layers of the U.S. labour movement. Significantly, it was the anti-interventionists who registered the most visible disapproval. West Coast activists around the Labor Network viewed the decision as "a clear signal that he (Kirkland) intended to deliver organized labor's support for the defense of U.S. corporate interests in Central America." [92] A "Labor Campaign For Kirkland's Resignation From the Kissinger Commission" was launched. "Sitting on the Commission," argued the campaigners, "is like crossing a picket line." [93]

Despite these protests, Kirkland's involvement was never in jeopardy. In early September 1983 AIFLD presented to the Commission its overall analysis of the situation in Central America and recommended the formation of a Central America Development Organization (CADO). The thinking behind CADO was the substance of another presentation made later the same month (discussed below). [94]

The main conclusions and recommendations of the Kissinger Report mirrored aspects of the pre-emptive reform perspective. The roots of the crisis in Central America was said to be social and economic and governments based on the oligarchies, said the report, were undeniably brutal. However, the crisis conditions had been inflamed by outside influences - revolutionary ideologies imported from the Eastern Bloc, Cuba, and now Nicaragua. Therefore massive military aid was needed to defeat the armed leftist insurgents, complimented by funds targeted towards economic development and deepening the democratic process. [95]

The points of convergence between AIFLD's analysis and conclusions and those of the final Report were so numerous that the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, in a DIA-authored statement that welcomed the Commission's findings, reproduced whole passages of the Report alongside segments of its own written subscriptions. Both the Report and the AFL-CIO agreed that the crisis amounted to a legitimate national security concern for the U.S. and that the principal threat was the subversive role of the Soviet Union and Cuba. [96] There was agreement, too, on the need to support the political centre in Central America and to strengthen democratic institutions, essentially the objectives stated by the NED. Furthermore, the power of the oligarchy had to be curbed: the U.S. Government, both agreed, could not tolerate its brutal methods and expect to retain the support of the American public for any long-term commitment to the region. The Commission's

Report made specific reference to the role of "free and democratic trade unions" which the U.S. should help develop as part of a process of nurturing "democratic cultures, institutions and practices." [97]

Aspects of AIFLD's CADO proposal were also echoed in the Report. [98] AIFLD had recommended that indigenous popular democratic organisations should receive U.S. aid directly as a means of strengthening a viable democratic centre. [99] The normal pattern of government-to-government aid, suggested AIFLD, should be seriously reviewed. Previous aid programs were known for their "relative ineffectiveness" in "changing the well being of the average citizen in Central America." [100] Finally, even the amount of U.S. aid suggested by the Commission over a five-year period (until 1989) - $8 billion - was close to the $7.5 billion suggested by AIFLD. [101]

The degree of similarity, in analysis and recommendations, between AIFLD's suggestions and the final Report can not be solely attributed to the forcefulness of Kirkland, or even to the weight of authority and influence of AIFLD in Central America. Kissinger was apparently impressed by the appearance before the Commission of several leaders of union federations linked to the AFL-CIO, including Jose Espinoza of the CUS in Nicaragua, and Salvadoran leaders Samuel Maldonado (UCS), Jorge Camacho of the Cooperatives Association (Asociacion de Cooperativas de Produccion Agropecuaria Integradas -ACOPAI), and Salvador Carazo (FESINCONSTANS), but their contributions were hardly decisive.

[102] The degree of congruency between AIFLD's proposals and what emerged in the Kissinger Report can best be explained by the fact that AIFLD's relatively sophisticated and elaborate proposals for pre-emptive reform provided the "constructive" dimension necessary to weaken Congressional resistance to the Administration's Central America policy. The Kissinger recommendations, therefore, provided a balance of counterinsurgency on the one hand and promises of reform on the other. "The crisis," declared the Report, "is the product of both indigenous and foreign factors...Poverty, repression, inequity, were all there, breeding fear and hate...while outside forces had intervened to exploit the anguish." [103]

The Soviet Union and Cuba were deemed responsible for the revolutionary insurgencies - the triumph of which must be prevented at all costs with immediate military aid. However, to give democracy a chance, economic help must also be forthcoming. [104] Thus, moderate-liberal anxieties were eased with the promise of reforms, and the Administration could now authorise an immediate increase of military aid.

CADO and the Question of Military Aid.

Before AIFLD had entered into the proceedings of the Kissinger Commission, the AFL-CIO had called for the suspension of military aid to El Salvador. The Executive Council indicated that this position would be changed when progress was seen to be made in areas of trade union rights,

the land reform program, the establishment of a just judicial system, and control of the death squads. In its first submission to the Commission AIFLD reiterated the AFL-CIO's position: aid should be suspended until there is progress in the case of the Sheraton murders. The Commission posited that military aid to El Salvador should be granted but made contingent upon "demonstrated progress" towards the type of objectives listed by the AFL-CIO. By endorsing the Report, the AFL-CIO now appeared to be supporting immediate military aid to El Salvador to deal with the insurgencies, while simultaneously opposing it on the grounds that sufficient progress had yet to be made in the other specified areas. [105]

Regarding Nicaragua, the Kissinger Report concluded that the contras represented "one of the incentives working in favor of a negotiated settlement between the U.S. and Nicaragua, and that the future role of the U.S. in those efforts must therefore be considered in the context of the negotiating process." [106] Again, by accepting the Report, the AFL-CIO appeared to be supporting what would later be known as the "insurance policy" position regarding contra aid, the chief proponent of which would be the Reagan Administration itself. The "insurance policy" position argued that the contras should be sustained as a fallback measure pending the refusal of the Sandinistas either to democratise Nicaragua or to stop supplying arms to the FMLN. It was later revealed that the CIA had considered it valuable to depict the

contras as a bargaining chip on the side of democracy. As former contra Edgar Chammorro expressed it, "Instead of admitting that our objective was to overthrow the Nicaraguan government we were instructed (by the CIA) to say that it was to create conditions for democracy." [107]

Union Opposition to Kissinger.

Within days of the release of the Kissinger Report, 19 trade union officials in Massachusetts issued a statement disassociating themselves from Kirkland's endorsement of the document. Part of the statement read, "The section of the Report dealing with El Salvador is in clear contradiction with AFL-CIO policy, as well as with the Report of the fact-finding delegation of the National Labor Committee." Furthermore, the Kissinger Report, "promotes bipartisan support for Reagan's Central American policy and thus increases his chances of re-election." The 19, including four vice presidents of their respective unions, also declared that, "The AFL-CIO supported labor federation in Nicaragua (CUS) is opposed to aid to the contras, as is the U.S. House of Representatives and the overwhelming majority of American people." [108] The Massachusetts group requested a meeting with Kirkland in early February but he informed them that his time was too restricted. ACTWU vice president Ed Clark complained that "Kirkland always seems to have time to meet with Ronald Reagan's foreign policy makers, but not with AFL-CIO members."

[109] In February, during a debate with a State Department official before the Executive Board of the IUE, Sheinkman attacked the policy of military aid to El Salvador's death-squad government and claimed the FMLN were supported by Salvadoran trade unionists, church people and radicals. [110]

The British TUC, once a staunch ally of the AFL-CIO in international labour, also criticised the Kissinger recommendations. The TUC General Council stated that it opposed U.S. intervention in Central America and asked the AFL-CIO "whether it considers that there have been improvements in the situation in El Salvador as required by the Kissinger Report as a condition for U.S. assistance." [111]

The broadly felt opposition to the Kissinger Report among union anti-interventionists, was, however, not to be reflected among members of the NLC on the AFL-CIO's Executive Council (E.C.). Ten NLC members participated in an E.C. meeting on February 21 when Kirkland was given an opportunity to clarify his position. In public statements prior to the meeting Kirkland had denied that any difference existed between the Commission's Report and AFL-CIO policy. [112] A timely statement was issued a few days prior to the E.C. meeting by the Secretary-Generals of seven Central American trade union confederations which welcomed the Kissinger Commission's recommendations on social and political development and praised the contribution to the Commission made by the AFL-CIO. The statement made no mention of

military aid. [113] The E.C. unanimously endorsed the Kissinger Report, stating that, "The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America closely parallels the view expressed by the AFL-CIO's E.C. statements and convention resolutions. Its recommendations represent a comprehensive and long overdue approach to Central America's urgent need for massive social, economic, and political reform and lay the basis for constructive bipartisan action to meet that need." However the E.C. stated that the Report, in calling for military aid to El Salvador, clearly violated the AFL-CIO's conditionality principle and could not be supported. [114]

A serious confrontation between NLC and Kirkland supporters on the E.C. was unlikely from the start. Aside from the core members of the NLC such as Sheinkman and perhaps Winpisinger, many others had gone along with the NLC initiative with an uncertain level of commitment. While still disposed towards a critical approach to developments in El Salvador, for most NLC members the situation in the country had improved at least a little. Furthermore, the AFL-CIO had come out against military aid, even though the Kissinger Report had somewhat complicated the issue. It was, after all, the contributions of the AFL-CIO which secured the conditionality principle and provided concrete proposals (CADO) to address the social and economic roots of the crisis. Perhaps Kirkland's participation on the Commission could be justified.

Kirkland himself was enthusiastic about CADO, describing it as "the most innovative part of the Report (that represented) a departure from past approaches." [115] The CADO proposal captured little attention, critical or otherwise, from the anti-interventionists who clearly regarded the question of military aid to be more important than the economic analysis embodied in CADO. The Kissinger Report made two clear recommendations - increased military aid and increased economic aid. For the E.C to endorse the Report but not the proposal to increase military aid was, in their view, farcical.

The CADO embraced a development logic which presupposed that economic progress would result from building a democratic political infrastructure. First, however, it was necessary that basic needs assistance reach non-government groups - including unions, cooperatives and small businesses. These groups were then expected to exert themselves politically as a result of their newfound stake in the system. The greater the number of groups touched by the aid, argued AIFLD, the more pluralistic and healthy the ensuing political activity would be. In contrast to government-to-government assistance, aid to the popular sector enhanced possibilities for a genuine and structural redistribution of wealth. Finally, in per capita terms, the CADO proposal was on a par with the Marshall Plan instigated in Europe following World War Two. [116]

The CADO proposal was indeed sewn into the fabric of the Kissinger Report - but with significant alterations. The

Report called for an Emergency Stabilization Program, and the establishment of an Emergency Action Committee "of concerned private citizens and organizations with a mandate to provide advice on the development of new public-private initiatives to spur growth and employment in the region...We encourage the greatest possible involvement of the private sector in the stabilization effort." Also proposed was a development program which required countries to "encourage private enterprise and individual initiative (and) to create favorable investment climates" in order to develop new export industries. The countries of Central America "would eventually become important production centres for low and medium technology goods to be exported to the U.S." [117] To assist this process the Report recommended the expanded availability of Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) insurance to the region. The OPIC insured prospective U.S. companies investing in Central America from inconvertibility of currency, expropriation, war, revolution and civil strife. [118]

The Report spoke favourably of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), a $350 million aid package launched by the Administration to encourage the integration of the Caribbean Basin countries - which included those of Central America - into the international (capitalist) market. The CBI was designed to help solve the negative balance of trade between the region and other developed countries, particularly the U.S. This trade imbalance, in the words of the U.S.

Department of State, "threatens political and social stability throughout the region and creates conditions which Cuba and others seek to exploit through terrorism and subversion." [119] None of the $350 million, of course, would be made available to regimes regarded as unfriendly to the U.S., namely Nicaragua and Cuba.

The AFL-CIO had suggested a tripartite organisational structure for CADO. Commissions would be set up in the U.S. and aid recipient countries with representatives drawn from government, business, and organised labour. The commissions would agree or contract with appropriate operating agencies - including AID, recipient governments, and U.S. and local Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO's) - to carry out programs and to supply essential technical assistance with the resources of the fund. [120] The Kissinger Report agreed with the principle of tripartite representation but urged that the majority representation should come from the private sector. [121] The clear weight of importance - organisational and economic - attached to the private sector in the Report therefore stood in contrast to the balanced tripartism suggested by the AFL-CIO. Furthermore, the emphasis on export-led development and free market formulae constituted an additional rebuff of the AFL-CIO's development proposals which leaned towards a basic needs model based on increased consumption and support for small private producers. Moreover, the CBI and OPIC had earlier been opposed by the AFL-CIO due to increased trade union concern over import

penetration following the 1980-81 recession. The economic model advanced by OPIC and the CBI consciously encouraged both the relocation of U.S. manufacturing to the Caribbean Basin countries and the export to the U.S. of low-cost manufacturing goods to the U.S. This, complained the AFL-CIO, would deprive workers in the U.S. of jobs and render a serious setback to industries that had already lost much of their home market to cheaper imports. [122] In early 1982 the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO criticised the CBI: "Aid in the development of Caribbean nations needs to be enhanced, but proposals for "one-way" free trade and additional investment incentives to U.S. firms for investing abroad should be rejected." [123]

In the light of these complaints the AFL-CIO's endorsement of the Kissinger Report amounted to more than just a contradictory departure from the Federation's position on military aid to El Salvador or an indirect means of supporting the Nicaraguan contras. The endorsement also cut across the AFL-CIO's "fair trade" or protectionist policies designed to defend the jobs of workers in the U.S. More than this, the liberal interventionist and anti-communist ideology of the AIFLD, ably represented on the Commission by Kirkland, caused the AFL-CIO to support the free-trade developmentalist orthodoxy of the Administration, an orthodoxy which Federation economists and lobbyists had in other situations strenuously opposed. In endorsing the Report the AFL-CIO was endorsing both military aid and an extension of the neo-liberal economic agenda that had so negatively affected the labour movement at

home. The Cold War priorities of Kirkland and AIFLD had triumphed over the economic interests of the membership as defined by the AFL-CIO's own policymakers. The international and domestic policies of the Federation now stood in peculiar contradiction to each other. [124]

Indeed, once the E.C. had endorsed the Kissinger Report, AIFLD, and Kirkland himself, began criticising proposals for the implementation of the Report's recommendations. Almost immediately Doherty criticised the Administration's proposed legislation, arguing that the proposals were "either silent or obscure with regard to some elements of the structure of CADO." Doherty complained that the Administration had committed "a scant three pages" to an initiative which, if properly implemented, could be "the most important achievement for democracy in this century." [125] The AFL-CIO News was more blunt, criticising Reagan for "undermining bipartisan efforts of achieving basic social, economic, and political reforms in Central America by continuing to provide military aid to El Salvador and failing to act on the recommendations of the Kissinger Commission." [126]

The AFL-CIO had enthusiastically endorsed the Kissinger Report even though the Federation officially opposed military aid to El Salvador and remained critical of the Report's economic aid proposals which departed substantially from its own CADO suggestions and conflicted with its position on trade and imports. There can be little doubt that AIFLD, the DIA, and Kirkland saw the endorsement as a means of remaining

active participants in the formation and execution of U.S. foreign policy. The NED had made the AFL-CIO a central actor in the Administration's war against global communism. To have not endorsed the Report because its own suggestions were effectively ignored or because it conflicted with the AFL-CIO's domestic economic policies would have threatened this newly acquired place of importance in international affairs. More important, the Kissinger Report and NED had declared war - military and economic - against Marxism-Leninism in Central America. As William Doherty himself expressed it, "The key question of our time is the future road of their revolution (Latin America) towards communist totalitarianism or towards democracy. For the American labor movement this is one of the paramount pivotal issues; all other questions must remain secondary." [127] Albert Shanker, leader of the AFT and a firm supporter of AIFLD, went even further; "Next to the conflict between the free world and the Soviet Union, all other issues become secondary. If that conflict is lost nothing else matters." [128]

The quiescent response of the NLC members on the E.C. to the Kissinger Report reflected an altogether different set of priorities. Few of the NLC members possessed anything like the degree of ideological commitment displayed by the staff of AIFLD and the DIA. To the latter the endorsement of the Report was central to their broader anti-communist objectives. The NLC members had never met to discuss the Kissinger

Commission or its findings, let alone formulate an alternative. Kirkland had also been very vocal, and positive, about the Report in the press, claiming that the AFL-CIO's position and the Report's findings were virtually indistinguishable from each other. For the NLC members to speak out against the Report would be tantamount to a public criticism of Kirkland and a declaration that the AFL-CIO was split over international policy. Such a course of action would inevitably incur serious political and personal repercussions. The E.C.'s endorsement of the Kissinger Report was therefore a virtual certainty from the start.

City and State Union Committees on Central America, 1983-84.

The period just before and after the release of the Kissinger Report was nevertheless a period of growth for the anti-intervention forces. The Washington Area Labor Committee was formed in late 1983. In October, activists from AFGE Local 41 issued an open letter which urged unionists to come to an inaugural meeting in early November. More than 100 responded. Of the 17 signatories to the letter, virtually all were white collar workers, including seven from AFGE itself. This reflected the preponderance of the unionised government sector workforce in Washington, D.C., as well as the relatively deep anti-intervention sentiment in the white-collar unions. The open letter emphasised soaring military expenditures, cuts in social spending, and criticised

Kirkland's role on the Kissinger Commission for delivering "labor's stamp of approval to the military build-up in the region and the Reagan policy of backing-up right-wing military dictatorships." [129]

Other committees were formed in early 1984. At state level the Massachusetts Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights and Anti-Intervention in Central America came into being; at city level, committees in Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Atlanta were established. Towards the end of the year state-level committees were formed in Minnesota and Maine.

A circulated letter urging the formation of the Massachusetts committee bore many of the names of those who had formally opposed Kirkland's participation on the Kissinger Commission. [130] The committee, which was made up of union leaders rather than rank and file activists, was politically more in line with the NLC than with the other solidarity-oriented local committees. In its statement of purpose, however, the Massachusetts committee referred to the efforts being made to rebuild Nicaraguan society - a sign of sympathy for the revolutionary process if not an unconditional endorsement of Sandinista leadership. The committee expressed support for free elections in both Nicaragua and El Salvador, for the right to organise and for the right to strike. [131] Unlike the parent NLC, the Massachusetts committee was making Central America as a region the focus of its attention and not to confine itself to El Salvador. Indeed, a spokesperson for

the new grouping urged Jack Sheinkman to take the lead in opposing U.S. policy in Nicaragua in the same way as he had done with El Salvador. [132]

The Philadelphia Labor Committee was launched in a December 1983 gathering at ACTWU's South Street Hall where 150 attended. Bernard Dinkin, the Executive Director of ACTWU told the gathering, "The NLC has been organized in order to make sure that the trade union movement is not handed over to President Reagan on this issue in the way it was handed over to President Johnson in the case of Vietnam." The active base of the Philadelphia committee consisted of an unusually high proportion of blue-collar unionists, many of whom had a respectable history of trade union work. Perhaps reflecting the enduring nature of the effects of the recession on the city, the committee's propaganda focused in particular on issues of jobs, runaway shops, etc, and their connection to the question of U.S. intervention. [133]

The formation of the Maine committee in July 1984 was accompanied by an expression of concern regarding the economic situation of the state. Maine AFL-CIO President Charles O'Leary wrote to ACTWU vice president Ed Clark, "After hearing a first-hand report of a trip to El Salvador by members of the NLC, and being particularly mindful of the impact on Maine workers of runaway shops...delegates to the Maine AFL-CIO COPE convention voted to constitute a Maine branch of the NLC and pledged that the Maine AFL-CIO would work to educate its membership on conditions in El Salvador." [134] Clark himself

later focused on the runaways in a September circular urging unionists to participate in the Massachusetts Labor Committee. Clark wrote, "Average wages of $26 per week have attracted such corporations as Kimberley Clark, Manhattan Industries, Monsanto Co., Phelps Dodge, Sherwin Williams, Sun Chemical and Tektronix. Many companies operating in El Salvador closed down facilities in the U.S. and have thrown workers out on the street." [134] The actual or perceived changes in the international economy were thus still very much in the forefront of the argument against intervention. However, the formation of a committee in Minnesota in the autumn of 1984 was accompanied by a warning from an anti-interventionist UAW shop steward who informed David Dyson, the NLC's coordinator, that the committee was mainly composed of "left orientated individuals (which means that) our chance of making Central America a mainstream labor issue here is somewhat reduced." [136]

The composition of the committees aside, new ones were still being formed. By mid-1984 twenty-one committees were functioning, although frequently at quite varying levels of activity. The El Salvador/Central America committees active during this period were: Atlanta; Boston; Chicago; Delaware; Maine; Massachusetts; West Massachusetts; Michigan; Milwaukee; Minnesota; Maine; New Jersey; New York City; Philadelphia; Portland (Oregon); Sacramento; San Diego; San Francisco; San Jose; Seattle; Washington, D.C. and West Virginia. On the West Coast the various committees met in early 1984 and

decided to formalise their links with each other, creating the Labor Network on Central America. Committees in Seattle, Portland and Sacramento constituted the planning body of the Network. On the eastern seaboard particularly, Dyson had played a highly significant role in launching several new committees, both organisationally and as a speaker at inaugural meetings and forums. This activity, backed by the wider circulation of the NLC's Labor, Terror, and Peace cast the NLC and Dyson in a more active role at a local level. His role also partly explains the attention accorded the runaways question by the East Coast committees. Dyson's union, ACTWU, had spearheaded several unsuccessful Congressional campaigns to restrict imports and criticised runaway shops and those involved in offshore sourcing. At a union forum in Wilmington, Delaware, entitled "Labor Speaks Out: Jobs at Home, Not War in Central America," 70 people heard Dyson link the questions of human and trade union rights in Central America with the job crisis facing members of unions like ACTWU. The meeting itself was organised by a laid-off worker of UAW Local 435. A leaflet promoting the meeting read, "Here in Delaware, close to 30,000 people are without jobs...union busting and pressures for concessions continue. The war in Central America is being fought for the same reason we're getting the shaft here at home: so corporations and millionaires can gain greater power and profits." [137]

In the main the more active committees continued to stress educational and "outreach" activities such as

slide-shows and presentations about Nicaragua and El Salvador using material produced by the various solidarity and religious organisations and other non-trade union sources. Inside the individual unions organising consistent anti-intervention work had proved to be difficult. One or two activists from several unions coming together to form a city-based Central America committee appeared to be a workable formula. Those same individuals linking up with like-minded colleagues in the same union to create, formally or otherwise, an internal Central America caucus was an altogether more difficult task. Not only were political pressures frequently greater, there were logistical problems, the most obvious being those pertaining to distance. Effective agitation around the question of Central America did, however, eventually occur at national conventions where activists came together to "network" and decide tactics.

At the annual convention of the SEIU in May the Executive Board urged acceptance of a union statement which echoed Federation policy on Central America. There should be no aid to El Salvador until "compelling evidence" became available to indicate that progress had been made in harnessing the death squads and enacting reforms. On Nicaragua, the Board expressed "grave doubts about the development of democratic institutions in Nicaragua and the guarantee of individual rights and free trade unions." However, the SEIU broke with the silence of the AFL-CIO regarding the contras (aside from the endorsement of the

Kissinger Report which expressed support for the counter-revolutionaries) to declare opposition to U.S. aid to the insurgents. [138] Despite this Executive Board proposal the anti-interventionists successfully moved a series of amendments. Mild approval of the progress made in El Salvador with the election of President Duarte was replaced with a reference to the "atmosphere of violence and intimidation" which surrounded the elections (discussed in Chapter Six) and to Duarte's inability during 1980-82 to control the repression. The statement called for a negotiated peace in the country. On Nicaragua, while echoing concern for union rights and freedoms, reference was made to the "impressive advances" of the revolution, advances that were now being threatened by the U.S.-supported war and economic destabilization. Rejection of the Kissinger Report was also urged on the grounds that it conflicted with established AFL-CIO policy positions. It was further resolved that the SEIU would participate in the work of the NLC. Here the SEIU broke precedent regarding the NLC participation: previously national union officers had joined or abstained on the basis of their own individual feelings and judgments. SEIU leader John Sweeney was now instructed to serve on the NLC through a convention decision even though his views on the Central America controversy were generally closer to those of Lane Kirkland. [139]

Speaking tours by Central American trade unionists continued throughout 1984, with the city and state based

committees playing a central organising role. However, the visits were less visible than the West Coast tour of 1983 and provoked none of the same controversy. In June 1984 two unionists from the pro-Sandinista health workers union (FETSALUD) visited Boston. While officially promoted by the Boston Committee for Health Rights in Central America, several unions in the Boston Area endorsed the tour. The FETSALUD representatives emphasised the contrast in U.S. and Nicaraguan governmental health provision. In Massachusetts alone, it was claimed that $83 million had been transferred from health care to military needs since 1976. Ten of 26 federally funded community health centres had been closed; 80,000 people had lost health care benefits including 45,000 children. In Nicaragua, a mass immunization against malaria, polio, and other diseases had occurred since the Sandinista victory in 1979. [140]

In addition to one-off events of this nature more ongoing activities involving the non-AFL-CIO supported unions in Central America were being established. Alejandro Molina Lara, the FENASTRAS representative in the U.S., had performed pioneering work in the area of building relationships between U.S. and Salvadoran unionists. Marta Alicia Rivera had done the same on behalf of the Salvadoran teachers union (ANDES) and she continued throughout 1984 to speak at union and solidarity gatherings. The ANDES representative conducted several state-wide union tours - including Arizona and Kentucky.

A number of tours of U.S. trade unionists to Central America also occurred during this period. In November 1983 the first independent national tour to Nicaragua of lower and middle level union officials occurred. Office holders and staff members of the CWA, SEIU, AFSCME (2 each) and the 290,000-member Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) were represented, as were two union educators from the Washington-based American Labor Education Center and a laid-off member of the IAM from Wisconsin. The report produced by the delegation, entitled Face-to-Face: An Inside View of Labor in Nicaragua, expressed firm support for the Sandinistas in trade union and other policy areas. Furthermore, the report was unambiguously critical of the U.S. Government who, in the three fiscal years to 1984, had provided the contras with $86 million in funds and had obstructed loans to Nicaragua cleared by international lending agencies. Moreover, the report added its voice to the city committees and others that had stressed economic reasons to oppose intervention. However, the report went further, arguing that economic considerations required trade unionists support the Nicaraguan revolution because it had encouraged trade unionism and prevented runaway shops. In addition the decision of the U.S. Government to discourage (and eventually prohibit) U.S. trade with Nicaragua was also presented as detrimental to U.S. workers. As the IAM member from Wisconsin expressed it, "Reagan has made it hard for them (Nicaraguans) to buy agricultural equipment, machine tools, and electrical

parts. And meanwhile here in Wisconsin there are thousands of people laid off from companies that make exactly the kind of stuff they need." [141]

Another trade union tour of Central America began in Nicaragua on July 22 and involved members of the Philadelphia committee. The visit sparked an incident which brought considerable media attention. In an auxiliary visit to Honduras a six-person delegation from the committee attended a union rally in Tegucigalpa, organised by the left-wing United Federation of Honduran Workers (Federacion Unidad de Trabajadores Hondorenos -FUTH) - a formation not regarded as legitimate by the AFL-CIO. At a 2,000-strong rally on June 27, two of the Philadelphia unionists addressed the crowd. President of AFSCME District Council 47, Tom Cronin, and CWA activist Mike Finlay (who addressed the rally in Spanish) called for a complete military withdrawal of the U.S. from Honduras. The UPI reported that Cronin declared, "We cannot support the presence of U.S. troops here to repress the people of Honduras. We demand immediate withdrawal of those troops." The following morning, the unionists were waiting to be met by FUTH representatives when plain-clothed police apprehended them, supported by six soldiers who trained machine guns on the delegates. The North Americans were detained for over five hours at Tegucigalpa airport before being allowed to travel to Managua where they re-joined the 32-member delegation.

News of the expulsion made headlines in the Philadelphia press; the tabloid Philadelphia Daily News reported "HONDURAS BOOTS PHILA. SIX". The U.S. Embassy in Honduras called for an investigation, a request echoed by two Pennsylvania Congressmen. AFL-CIO officials in Washington responded to the incident by disowning the delegation despite the fact that the six involved in the incident were members of unions affiliated to the Federation. [142]

Conclusion.

By 1984 the conflict within the U.S. trade unions concerning U.S. intervention in Central America bore the character of a war of position. The level of anti-intervention activity had expanded, if measured by the growth in the city-based trade union committees formed to pursue Central America work. Tours to and from Central America had strengthened ties between the left unions of Nicaragua and El Salvador (as well as Honduras) and the anti-intervention activists in the U.S. labour movement. At the leadership level the NLC had expanded to a dozen top union officials, several of whom held positions on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO. However, as the E.C.'s endorsement of the Kissinger Report gave evidence, the NLC members were not inclined to form a distinct faction on the E.C. and thus declare their clear opposition to the Administration's policy in Central America. The NLC's analysis of events in El Salvador

indicated that firm opposition to the economic and political role of the U.S. in the region did in fact exist among the leaders of U.S. trade unions, although this was accompanied by a clear reluctance to criticise those in the Federation who appeared to be actively supporting Administration policy, namely AIFLD and the DIA.

For the AFL-CIO's international affairs establishment the formation of the NED and the release of the Kissinger Report had considerably enhanced the status of the AFL-CIO's international work. Despite substantive alterations, AIFLD had made an impression on the Kissinger Report and, in the case of the NED, the AFL-CIO had become the largest recipient of NED funds. It was somewhat paradoxical that the international role and reputation of the AFL-CIO had reached new heights precisely at a time when the "internal challenge" to Cold War unionism had itself reached new organisational, political, and (in some respects) ideological dimensions.

It is difficult to evaluate precisely to what extent the rise of anti-intervention sentiment was determined by Reagan's attacks on the unions or by changes in the behaviour and impact of the U.S. multinationals. Nevertheless, consistent reference to the anti-union character of the U.S. Government, the exploitation of cheap foreign labour by "runaway shops", as well as cuts in social programs indicated that these issues were striking resonant chords among sections of the labour movement rank and file. The challenge to Cold War unionism, it seems reasonable to conclude, was directly

linked to the experience of the U.S. labour movement following the unravelling of the postwar social pact. However, these economic concerns were frequently accompanied by concern for human and trade union rights in El Salvador and by highly favourable comment on the role of the Sandinistas in advancing a pro-worker revolutionary project in Nicaragua.

Chapter Five discusses the concern of anti-intervention trade unionists for trade union rights issues in El Salvador. It then describes AIFLD's role in supporting the U.S. Government-endorsed candidate, Jose Napoleon Duarte, in the 1984 Salvadoran elections and the formation and disintegration of the Social Pact between Duarte and the AIFLD-supported unions. Chapter Five also charts the re-emergence of the left federations and their challenge to the new government. This challenge resulted in AIFLD, Duarte and the leaders of the armed forces depicting the left unions as front organisations for the FMLN guerillas.

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CHAPTER 5

EL SALVADOR: TRADE UNIONS AND THE "DEMOCRATIC OPENING"

Chapter 2 discussed the degree and significance of the AFL-CIO's intervention in El Salvador from the launching of the campesino organisation, UCS, in the 1960's until the time of the reformist coup in 1979 and the massive repression that followed. This chapter continues the account of AIFLD's involvement in El Salvador around the period of U.S.-supported elections in early 1984 and the formation of a social pact between the governing Christian Democrats and the AIFLD-sponsored unions. Furthermore, this chapter presents an account of the impact of anti-intervention trade union activities on the Salvadoran trade unions during the same period.

The Reagan Administration's belligerence towards the Nicaragua in 1984 stood in stark contrast to its posture towards neighbouring El Salvador. The election of Jose Napoleon Duarte as President in March 1984 was hailed as an authentic democratic opening, even though the contest did not include the FMLN who by then controlled roughly one quarter of the Salvadoran countryside. AIFLD and the UCS rallied

enthusiastically behind Duarte. According to numerous observers the active intervention of AIFLD and the UCS in the campaign of the Christian Democrats was the decisive factor in Duarte's narrow victory over the far-right ARENA party. [1] AIFLD's account of the Salvadoran elections generally reflected the self-congratulatory statements of Congress and the Administration: democracy had triumphed over the extremes of left and right. The election of Duarte was a foreign policy victory for the Reagan Administration, and AIFLD had played a major part in bringing it about. [2]

Anti-interventionists and Trade Union Rights.

Throughout this period the NLC continued to focus attention on the human and trade union rights situation. Active campaigns were instigated to assist unionist detainees or "disappeared". Elections or no elections, the extent of the abuse was made clear in the disclosures of Tutela Legal, the Church-based legal aid office in San Salvador. In 1983, 5,143 non-combattants were killed in the country, and as of December the same year there were 430 political prisoners in Mariona prison and 55 women in Ilopango prison. In January 1984 the National Police arrested over 100 union leaders and kidnapped 16 others. [3]

Incidents such as these prompted a series of telephone and telegram campaigns organised by West Coast unionists involved in the Committee In Support of Trade Union Rights

(CISTUR) and the Trade Unionists In Support of El Salvador (TUSES) and the city-based union committees in San Jose and Sacramento. The urgent need for a rapid response network to deal with arrests had been tragically illustrated the previous October. Sheinkman at ACTWU's headquarters in New York had circulated a request for urgent action to free Santiago Hernandez, the General Secretary of the Unifying Federation of Salvadoran Trade Unionists (Federacion Unitaria de Sindicatos Salvadorena -FUSS). Hernandez had helped form the left-wing Unity Movement of Unions and Guilds of El Salvador (MUSYGES) in 1982. [4] A letter to Sheinkman from Frank Martino, the President of the International Chemical Workers Union (ICWU), conveyed the outcome of the case: "I was distressed to note that your request for urgent action regarding Sr. Hernandez arrived about the same time as word of his death at the hands of the death squads. The need to move more quickly in such matters was dramatically emphasised in this situation." [5]

The murder of Hernandez marked the tragic end of MUSYGES as a force for radical unionism in El Salvador and thus became an important conjunctural moment in the recent history of the Salvadoran union movement. The program of MUSYGES had resembled that of the FDR (see Chapter Two), but, like its political partners, MUSYGES had endured severe repression. As one author described, "The overwhelming majority of political assassinations of unionists (in El Salvador) have been borne by the labor federations of the revolutionary

left." [6] Fear of repression caused other unions to withdraw from MUSYGES and by the end of 1983 ten independent trade unions had left the federation.

In another case David J. Rathke, International Representative of ACTWU, wrote to President Reagan informing him that sixteen Salvadoran unionists had been arrested by the Salvadoran National Police in January 1984. "Their only crime," wrote Rathke, "is that of supporting a free democratic labor movement in El Salvador." [7] The U.S. Department of State advised Rathke that the arrested unionists were members of the Revolutionary Trade Union Federation (Federacion Sindical Revolucionaria -FSR), "the widely known labor front of the guerilla group Popular Revolutionary Bloc/ Popular Liberation Forces (BPR-FPL)." [8] Furthermore, the unionists had been "legally arrested" and charged with conspiracy against the government. The U.S. Embassy in San Salvador had assured the State Department that procedures in the case of these arrests were correctly followed. The Department reassured Rathke that, "According to the National Police Director, Colonel Reynaldo Lopez Nuila, who is also a member of the Salvadoran Human Rights Commission, the National Police has so far carefully observed all proper respect for the physical integrity of the detainees and for their human rights." [9] Nine of the sixteen were incarcerated in Mariona.

Amnesty International's investigation into the case did not substantiate the claim by the National Police Director (and a member of the Salvadoran Human Rights Commission) that

the physical integrity of the detainees had been respected. AI disclosed that a Mexican observer who was arrested with the sixteen testified after her release that she had been psychologically tortured during her three-day detention and had heard others being beaten. After international appeals the remaining nine unionists were released in July. They stated that they had been tortured into confessing membership of an armed opposition group. [10]

Further activity over the arrest, detention, and torture of trade unionists emerged as a direct consequence of the NLC tour of El Salvador in 1983. The urgency in which the following case was pursued demonstrates how direct contact with trade unionists in El Salvador gave these initiatives a personal dimension and thus a higher degree of impetus. The NLC tour had facilitated direct contact with unions and unionists who had endured serious and continuing repression. The case of the Salvadoran teachers union (ANDES) offered a graphic and disturbing example of the systematic and long-term repression of a single union. This, combined with the fact that two leading NEA functionaries were part of the NLC delegation, provided the basis for future support of ANDES by the anti-interventionists in the U.S. labour movement. Militant activity by ANDES dated back to the mid-1960s when the union led a march of 20,000 teachers to protest a proposed cut in retirement benefits. In 1968 ANDES staged a 58-day national strike, one which effectively marked the beginning of a new era of union repression in El Salvador. In the wake

of the strike, ANDES suffered assassinations and their demonstrations were broken up by riot police. ANDES was a leading force in the rise of the popular movement during the 1970s, and during the intensified repression of 1979-82 264 ANDES activists were killed and 44 disappeared. [11]

In 1983 ANDES was still functioning as a union and remained, ironically, a certified legal organisation despite its need to operate in a semi-clandestine manner. In March 1984 the National Guard had broken into the union's headquarters in San Salvador and seized membership records. The continuing presence of Marta Alicia Rivera as the ANDES representative in the U.S. ensured that ANDES would continue to be a focus of anti-interventionist attention. Herself a torture victim, Rivera's testimony and the plight of ANDES were heard by thousands of unionists and others in the U.S. At an organisational level, the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), a non-aligned international teachers organisation formed in 1947, monitored the ongoing difficulties of the union. The U.S. affiliate to WCTOP, the 1.7 million National Education Association (NEA), began to pay particular attention to ANDES following the visit to El Salvador of John De Mars, the NEA's International Relations Official who participated in the NLC tour in 1983. DeMars had established a relationship with Julio Portillo who, also in 1983, was an exiled member of ANDES' Executive Council, soon to become President of the union. Portillo had fled El Salvador after having been shot

and wounded by security personnel. The 1983 annual report of WCTOP put the number of dead and disappeared ANDES members since 1980 at 300. WCTOP itself intervened on behalf of a number of teachers in El Salvador and assisted a number of Salvadoran educators to flee the country. The NEA helped secure political asylum of ANDES members to the U.S. [12]

The NLC's tour and the visit to Mariona prison in 1983 brought the delegation into contact with eleven imprisoned hydro-electrical workers who had been members of the Union of Electrical Workers of the Lempa River (Sindical de Trajabadores de la Comision Ejecutivo Electrica de Rio Lempa - STECEL). [13] The "STECEL eleven" had been arrested in August 1980 as a result of their involvement in a national strike called to protest attacks by the Salvadoran government forces against their union. During the two years which preceded the strike, death squads had killed eighteen STECEL members and dynamited and machine-gunned the union office.

Sheinkman was determined to bring the details of the STECEL case to the U.S. labour movement and to build a campaign for their release. In May 1984 Sheinkman's office released further information pertaining to the story: the day after the arrest of the STECEL leaders the union was dissolved by government decree. The prisoners then spent 70 days at the headquarters of the National Guard, where they were starved, beaten, and told their families would be killed. They were then transferred to another prison and five of the unionists were released. Eight months later, one of the five, Miguel

Angel Centeno, was murdered by government security forces. [14] In September 1980 prison authorities extracted "extra judicial statements" from the STECEL leaders, who were forced to confess to acts of terrorism and to occupying public service installations for insurrectionary purposes. On June 11, 1981, the 17-year old daughter of one of the STECEL eleven, Jose Valencia, was abducted from her home by armed men. Her tortured body was later found in a public garbage dump in the city of Santa Ana. On August 20, 1982, the wife and 13-year old daughter of another of the eleven imprisoned, Hector Recinos, were arrested. Ironically, Recinos' wife was a member of Mothers of Prisoners and the Disappeared, a group organised to investigate disappearances and even perform the gruesome task of finding and identifying the often severely mutilated and unrecognisable remains of death squad victims. The truth of her fate would be hidden for two years. [15]

At the beginning of the campaign initiated by Sheinkman the STECEL eleven had spent more than three and a half years in custody without trial and were among the longest held political prisoners in El Salvador. Sheinkman interpreted this as clear evidence that the judicial system was not working and that the STECEL members had little hope for vindication or release. The campaign began with an appeal throughout the labour movement to send messages to prominent Salvadoran and U.S. Government officials. "From there," said the ACTWU leader, "we hope to take whatever steps are necessary to see that these men do not become further

victimized in a conflict which finds trade unionists in the front ranks of the victims." [16] Thousands and letters and telegrams were written as a response to Sheinkman's appeal. The campaign was assisted by Hector Recinos' son, aged 16, who was brought into the U.S. illegally and spoke in Boston before a union forum at the Park Plaza Hotel. The meeting was designed to coincide with the annual convention of the Massachusetts State AFL-CIO held at the hotel. During the proceedings the younger Recinos met with and received the support of the President of the IUE, William Bywater. [17]

On October 15th the STECEL workers were released from Mariona. After more than three years of inactivity regarding the case, Lane Kirkland also called for their release just days before the decision to free them was taken. Anti-interventionists involved in the STECEL effort claimed that AIFLD, given their years of activity in El Salvador and their relationship to the U.S. Embassy, had been fully aware of the situation but had deliberately remained silent because the STECEL union was associated with the left. [18]

On the eve of the STECEL eleven leaving prison the Secretary General of the Bank Workers Union was kidnapped. His body was discovered a few days later. The NLC coordinator, David Dyson, flew from New York to assist as an escort of the released men, who were due to leave for the Netherlands the same day. In his diary inserts made at the time Dyson describes the airport scene; "Hector (Recinos) told a reporter of their happiness about being released, but their

sadness in leaving behind so many disappeared relatives and dead friends. He thanked the workers from the U.S. who worked hard for their freedom." Recinos, says Dyson, was then questioned regarding the fate of his wife and daughter. "Hector..told the reporter that the army had gotten word to him yesterday, his last day in prison, that his wife and 13-year old daughter were killed sixteen days after their capture at the headquarters of the Treasury Police." The STECEL leader also told Dyson that, when his daughter's body was found, "she had bullet holes everywhere." [19]

The November issue of the IUE's newspaper celebrated the release of the STECEL members. In an editorial statement the union recognised its own part in the campaign; members had petitioned U.S. and Salvadoran officials and convention delegates in Pittsburgh had called for their release. The statement reflected the increased awareness of the relationship between economic issues, human rights, and their impact on workers in the U.S. "Without free trade unions in El Salvador," stated the IUE, "large American corporations build plants there, pay slave wages to Salvadoran workers and no wages to American workers. Working both against the middle, the corporations are advancing their cause of a union-free environment on both sides of the border." [20] The paper of AFGE Local 12 in Washington, 12 Now, described the STECEL release as "a significant victory for the labor movement there as well as the labor movement in this country." [21] AFGE's support for the campaign was registered in a

unanimous decision of the Executive Board in September. [22] Sheinkman was also personally congratulated for his role in ensuring the release by the President of the ICWU, Frank Martino, who declared in a letter to Sheinkman, "There have been few battles in labor history that were as just..In many ways their release must be seen as your personal triumph as well. The battle for STECEL represents a hallmark in international labor unity." [23]

Duarte, AIFLD, and the "Social Pact."

While the NLC and its grassroots supporters were giving priority to the victims of trade union repression, AIFLD was helping to ensure the victory of the Christian Democrat, Jose Napoleon Duarte, in the country's elections. The campaign was fought against a background of continuing violence. Politically motivated killings were running at 93 per month in the period prior to the March 1984 election. The U.S. Department of State, in citing the figures, nonetheless pointed to the "positive downward trend"; deaths in this category - according to U.S. Embassy calculations - had been 140 per month throughout 1983, 288 per month in 1982, 444 per month in 1981, and 800 per month in 1980 when the body count first began. [24]

The decision of the moderate unions in the UPD to support Duarte can be traced to Honduras in July 1983 when UPD leaders met with AIFLD representatives to discuss the terms

under which the Christian Democrats might be supported. The UPD's proposals were virtually indistinguishable from those unions of the left: human rights must be protected, offenders must be punished, and Duarte must deliver promised improvements in wages and make reforms to protect workers. Furthermore, the UPD wanted representation in the government at high-level positions important to the labour movement. Finally, the UPD was categorical in its demand for a peaceful resolution to the military conflict by means of an open dialogue between the government and the FMLN-FDR. [25] The UPD's opposition to military aid was reflected in this position. Unlike the AFL-CIO, the UPD had never singled out the Sheraton victims (Hammer and Pearlman) as a yardstick for its policy on military aid. The Christian Democrats agreed to the "Social Pact" with the UPD, and from that moment AIFLD worked strenuously with the UPD to get Duarte elected. [26] AIFLD assigned 360 Salvadoran union organisers for, as one source expressed it, "the sole purpose of actively campaigning for Duarte." [27]

AIFLD's own report of the campaign described how "UPD members went door-to-door in the towns, and farm-to-farm in the countryside, explaining to the people the importance of the elections, the new registration and voting procedures, and why the UPD supported the Christian Democratic candidate." [28] However, the Duarte campaign before March was not actively supported by a number of key unions of the centre, namely FESINCONSTRANS, ACOPAI, UCS and ANIS. [29] In the

March election Duarte received 43% of the vote in a 75% voter turnout, thus necessitating a run-off with the notorious right-wing candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson in May. In the second and decisive battle Duarte won just under 54% of the vote and secured the Presidency. In the May 6th election all the moderate unions entered the fray behind Duarte, anxious to defeat the right-wing challenge of ARENA and D'Aubuisson. The left federation FENASTRAS, however, advised its members not to vote for either the Christian Democrats or ARENA. [30]

Duarte's victory meant that significant obstacles which had prevented the AFL-CIO from supporting military aid to El Salvador were now about to be removed. In August 1984 Isidoro Sibrian Lopez, a lieutenant in the Salvadoran armed forces, was indicted for the murder of Hammer, Pearlman, and Viera at the Sheraton hotel four years earlier. Kirkland was now able to put the weight of the AFL-CIO behind Reagan's request for a $70 million package of supplemental military aid. In a statement to Congress he declared, "The Duarte government was elected with the full support of the workers and campesinos. Duarte deserves a fair chance to achieve his objective since he is committed to meeting the conditions of democracy, dialogue for peace, and the prosecution of the murders of the AFL-CIO representatives." [31]

The indictment of Sibrian concluded a successful period for AIFLD's operations in El Salvador. The land reform program, despite NLC complaints, was perceived to be advancing, and AIFLD-supported unions now had a preponderant

position in both the urban and rural sectors of the Salvadoran labour movement. Despite some signs of revitalization, the left unions had been decimated by the 1980-83 repression, and their challenge to the centre unions had been severely stunted. AIFLD had successfully shifted attention from the countryside and the land reform program to the urban unions and had mobilized both behind the political centre. Furthermore, AIFLD had stamped its mark both on the Kissinger Commission's proceedings and on the final report and in so doing won considerable bipartisan recognition for AIFLD's role in Central America. Occasional criticisms of the Administration's implementation of the Commission's proposals had not dampened the AFL-CIO's official enthusiasm for the Report; in a speech before the Foundation for International Relations in Lisbon on June 29th 1984, Kirkland said that the Report went "to the heart of the democratic challenge in Latin America." [32] Finally, given the consensus between the stated objectives of the Administration and AIFLD regarding the Salvadoran elections, both were surely gratified by the hero's welcome given to Duarte by Congress during his post-election visit to Washington.

Once inaugurated, Duarte appointed UPD (and ACOPAI) leaders to government posts as was agreed in the Social Pact deliberations. [33] However, following the June 1984 inauguration of the new President the social pact between Duarte and the UPD quickly began to unravel. Even before the elections the building workers federation, FESINCONSTRANS,

experienced a period of tense relations with the UPD. The federation "temporarily rejected" the Social Pact with the arguments that "no political party, so far, represents or defends the interests of the people" and that the "best guarantee of full respect for labor rights in a country is the existence of a strong, independent, and democratic labor movement." [34]

Now that Duarte was elected and UPD leaders were in government positions, it was anticipated that immediate progress would be made to fulfill promises made under the Duarte-UPD Social Pact. However, in the post-election period weekly meetings occurred between Duarte and UPD leaders exposed disagreements between the UPD and the President over dialogue with the guerillas - one of the principal planks of the Social Pact. [35] Journalists operating in San Salvador or observing the situation there reported that AIFLD severely rebuked the UPD for applying concerted pressure on Duarte to honour the social pact. [36] For AIFLD and the U.S. Embassy the situation further deteriorated when, on August 30, UPD leaders appeared on Salvadoran television and criticised Duarte for not pursuing an FMLN-Government dialogue and for presiding over a new military buildup. [37] AIFLD later insisted that the largest of the UPD affiliates were not party to the protest, which was led by "a minority faction" within the UPD claiming to represent the whole organisation. Furthermore, declared AIFLD, the AFL-CIO had always supported dialogue as "the most promising solution to the wars in both

El Salvador and Nicaragua." The issue, therefore, was not controversial. [38] AIFLD dismissed the protest by characterising it as an attempt by lower-level UPD leaders to grab the limelight from their more powerful colleagues. [39] Later AIFLD declared that "several dissidents were secretly collaborating with the Marxist-Leninist guerillas to disrupt the UPD." [40]

The action of the UPD leaders was described by several commentators as a major setback for AIFLD and U.S. government policy, coming just three months after the euphoria of Duarte's electoral triumph. Moreover, two journalists, Christopher Norton and Michael Luhan, presented damaging accounts of AIFLD'S manipulation and underhandedness throughout the entire episode. The Institute's considerable resources, and its influence within the U.S. Embassy, were allegedly employed to penalise unions financially and politically if they opposed Duarte. According to one version, news of the impending television appearance of UPD leaders "horrified AIFLD country director Bernard Packer. For several years the Institute had been paying almost 80% of the expenses of four of the UPD's five membership organizations; in return, it felt it had the right to expect their allegiance. Yet now the UPD was attacking the very basis of U.S. policy - military aid to defeat the FMLN." [41] Packer and the Embassy's Labor Attache, Eduardo Baez, insisted that the television event be cancelled and a statement the UPD leaders had drafted be amended. Frustrated by their failure to deflect these UPD

leaders from their intentions, AIFLD's armed agents reportedly entered the offices of one of the dissident unions to repossess the jeep and two-way radio that had been used during the election campaign. [42] The repossession episode "shocked UPD leaders and sparked what quickly became a heated issue between them and Packer on the freedom to call their own political shots." [43]

AIFLD Builds A New Federation.

In early September 1984 AIFLD announced plans to form a new union federation in El Salvador. The organisation would be called the Confederation of Democratic Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores Democratica -CTD). AIFLD's Packer spent the closing months of 1984 trying to persuade UPD leaders to affiliate, allegedly threatening a cessation of AIFLD funding to unions who refused to comply. [44] The Institute claimed that the decision to promote the CTD was taken in order to meet the institutional concerns of the smaller UPD unions. The UPD was "not a true labor federation" but had served as a "coalition for survival" during the period of repression. It had no constitution, no regular meetings, no dues structure, and no defined set of officers. The lull in the repression had resulted in other unions crawling out from under the wreckage of the 1980-83 period; these unions, claimed AIFLD, had no umbrella organisation which could serve as a vehicle to relate to the already established UPD unions.

Furthermore, leaders of FESINCONSTRANS and the UCS had been co-initiators, with AIFLD, of the CTD. [45] The CTD was not, according to AIFLD, a response to the August 30 press conference. Rather, plans to create the CTD probably encouraged the dissidents to act out of fear of losing the influence they had exerted in the ad-hoc UPD. [46]

A U.S. Embassy report on the Salvadoran labour movement, published in August 1984, validated AIFLD's claim that the decision to form the CTD was taken before the press conference of August 30th. However, for anti-interventionists in the U.S. unions, the exact sequence of events was not a critical factor in their interpretation of the developments in the Salvadoran labour movement during this period. AIFLD's decision to promote the CTD, whenever it was taken, amounted to an announcement that the services of the UPD were no longer required. The UPD had already displayed a certain independence. Some unions were reluctant to enter into a pact with Duarte; others, once the pact was agreed, had pressured Duarte to comply. Now that Duarte was elected, U.S. policy objectives must not be threatened by the UPD pressuring Duarte from the left. The U.S. Embassy had already declared that the principal priority was to get the economy on a sound footing through the creation of a favourable investment climate. The Kissinger Commission had made it clear that the military defeat of the FMLN was needed to make economic revitalization a reality. AIFLD had been a significant voice in the formulation of those priorities; however, the clauses in the

Pact, particularly those pertaining to economic improvements for workers and to negotiations to end the war, were clearly contrary to those objectives. For anti-interventionists the formation of the CTD indicated AIFLD's true loyalties. Instead of supporting the UPD in their efforts with regard to the Social Pact, AIFLD moved to reign in the UPD and thus neutralize its threat to the regime. In a choice between the interests of the independent, free, and democratic labour movement, and the priorities of U.S. foreign policy, AIFLD chose the latter. [47]

During the final weeks of 1984 AIFLD's policy in El Salvador received a further setback which compelled the AFL-CIO to register again its opposition to U.S. military aid. On November 15 the Salvadoran Supreme Court dismissed the case against Lt. Lopez Sibrian in the proceedings investigating the Sheraton murders. The AFL-CIO's Department of Information issued a bitter press release: "Because the facts linking Lopez Sibrian to the heinous murders have been so well established, the AFL-CIO is convinced that this decision amounts to a whitewash of a murderous army officer by a corrupt judicial system...We cannot in good conscience suggest to U.S. citizens that they should continue to support military aid to a country where the judicial system repeatedly fails to punish terrorists. (Progress in the Sheraton case had) formed the basis for the support given by the AFL-CIO to the National Bipartizan (Kissinger) Commission on Central America." [48] The Salvadoran Supreme Court rebuked the

AFL-CIO for its criticism of its decision in a full-page advertisment in a Salvadoran newspaper, as did the National Association of Private Enterprise. Finally, the right-wing majority in the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution condemning the AFL-CIO's statement as "...violating our juridical sovereignty by interfering in purely national matters." [49]

To complete an increasingly worrying picture for AIFLD, twenty-one left unions came together in November to form the Workers Solidarity Coordinating Council (Coordinadora de Solidaridad de Trabajadores -CST). At the end of 1983 the previous left coalition, MUSYGES, had finally buckled under the weight of the repression; the CST intended to pursue the objectives of MUSYGES without establishing firm links with the FDR-FMLN. The CST initiated solidarity efforts in an attempt to build authentic union unity at the base level. [50] The CST came into existence to support a strike in a sports club in San Salvador; its success in this action prompted its establishment as an ongoing organisation. [51] Member unions of FENASTRAS, FUSS, and the Food, Clothing and Textile federation (Federacion Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores de la Industria del Alimento, Vestido, Textil, Similares y Conexos de El Salvador -FESTIAVTSES) were to play an important role in the new formation. The CST immediately established the "May Ist Committee" in order to bring El Salvador's left unions back on the streets for May Day, 1985. [52] If the "democratic opening" in El Salvador had truly been

established, the scattered remnants of the left unions had regrouped and were poised to move into the political space that had been created.

The Challenge to Duarte

The early months of 1985 witnessed AIFLD and its supporters in the Salvadoran trade union movement work to set the new CTD on a firm footing, but things did not go as planned. In the country's largest union, the Construction Workers' Union (Sindicato Union de Trabajadores de Construccion -SUTC), a controversy broke out over the election of incumbent General Secretary, Salvador Carazo, the President of the CTD. Dissidents in the union opposed to the formation of the CTD accused Carazo of packing a January meeting with non-union members and of using AIFLD's money to pay for their votes. Carazo's election was critical to the future of the CTD. If Carazo had lost the SUTC contest, his presidency of the CTD would have lost legitimacy. [53] The Salvadoran Labor Ministry endorsed the result in a remarkably fast two hours. Dissident pressure, however, caused the Ministry to cancel the vote and request a new election. [54]

Also in January UPD leaders complained to William Doherty about the top-down method used to create the CTD, and of the role of AIFLD's country director Bernard Packer who, said the UPD leaders, "promoted the participation of suspicious persons and mini-organizations which have attempted

to destroy the unity of the UPD." [55] The UPD later called on AIFLD to remove Packer from El Salvador because of his allegedly corrupting influence over certain union leaders, a request which, as the rift in the UPD appeared to deepen, won the support of U.S. Ambassador, Thomas Pickering. [56] Packer was moved in March to work with AIFLD's operation in Guatamala. The U.S. Embassy's labour attache, Eduardo Baez, also made his exit from El Salvador in February following threats to his life; the Embassy said the threats had come from the FMLN. However, the Boston Globe reported that Baez had thought it possible that the threats "...could be coming from unionists angered by the bickering over the Institute's (AIFLD's) confederation (CTD)." [57]

Tensions had also developed in the crucial rural union, the UCS. Ramon Mendoza, one of the instigators of the August 30, 1984, press conference of UPD dissidents, was ousted from the leadership of the UCS. Mendoza called his own UCS congress for March 10, and the 467 delegates elected him leader. [58] Two men now claimed the leadership of the UCS, Mendoza and the AIFLD-supported Samuel Maldonado, who had testified before the Kissinger Commission and had been accorded a position in the Duarte government. By March 1985 the UPD was well and truly split, although still supportive of Duarte and the Christian Democrats against the forces of the right. However, in an internal document sent to Duarte in February, UPD leaders accused the party of lacking "the consciousness, clarity, and commitment" needed to implement

the Social Pact. [59]

AIFLD denied it had taken sides in the UCS or SUTC disputes. In the case of the former, both Maldonado and Mendoza had government positions to protect, and the Institute had advised against union leaders becoming part of the government. Of the two leaders, Mendoza was castigated by AIFLD as the renegade who drew support for his UCS conference from cooperatives who had received loans approved by him in his role as vice-president of the Agrarian Development Bank. Furthermore, Mendoza had used force to take over the UCS offices, resulting in the injury of some of its occupants. The membership, claimed AIFLD, had put their faith in Maldonado which explained why he had acquired the support of the Labour Ministry over the maverick Mendoza. [60]

Conflicting accounts of this already complicated situation should not be allowed to detract from the importance of the factional battles and personality clashes which took place during this period. To AIFLD and U.S. policy makers the UPD constituted the only authentic base of support for Duarte; therefore the factional struggle that occurred inside the UPD over the social pact and the formation of the CTD was profoundly worrying. The right wing and the reactionary elements in the military opposed Duarte but saw him as a vehicle that brought military aid from Washington to San Salvador. The vehicle had to be maintained if the war was to be won. The FMLN, in control of at least a quarter of the Salvadoran countryside, saw Duarte as an agent of imperialism

set in place by Washington in order to legitimize greater U.S. intervention. Furthermore, the U.S. President had staked his entire foreign policy on the outcome in El Salvador; the country would not be "lost to communism" as was clearly the danger in Nicaragua.

For AIFLD the shift within the Administration from the Kirkpatrick position towards the "democratic" solution had legitimized and bolstered the AFL-CIO's status in the formulation of U.S. Central America policy. El Salvador, therefore, was not only a test-case for the Reagan Administration; the weight of AIFLD's involvement in the land reform and the elections also made it a test-case for the AFL-CIO's foreign policy architects. Congress had heard a year earlier that no one had done more for democracy in El Salvador than the AFL-CIO. In June 1984 glowing accounts were given to Congress of the progress towards democratic change amid the challenges of the totalitarian left and the dictatorial right. Everything now rested on the unions. If Duarte, in the pit of the deepening economic crisis in El Salvador, failed to keep the majority of the union movement behind him, the government could be on its way to defeat. Intense polarisation, deepening civil war, and, ultimately, the introduction of U.S. combat troops might well follow. The "democratic road" would be transformed into a bloody blind alley, and the AFL-CIO's foreign policy would be judged as a disaster.

The story of AIFLD and its difficulties with the UPD was transmitted to anti-interventionists in the U.S. via their own union and journalistic connections and the solidarity groups like CISPES. However, El Salvador's unions also captured the attention of the mainstream press. The Washington Post suggested that U.S. policy in El Salvador was moving to the right of Duarte and that AIFLD was partnering the Administration in the process. AIFLD's plans to coax unions into the CTD had indeed been resisted by several large UPD unions. The Post also suggested that Packer had "withdrawn financial and logistical support" to these unions in order to "pressure them to join the new confederation." [61]

The Post article prompted a same-day response from the AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs. A press release which reaffirmed support for Duarte also declared that "The AFL-CIO deeply resents the implication..that a.) AIFLD slavishly adheres to the foreign policy of the U.S. Government and b.) it would do or say anything supportive of the right-wing reactionary political forces in El Salvador and, c.) that actions of AIFLD would be deliberately divisive of trade union unity." The statement concluded, "The AFL-CIO sees no necessary conflict between the CTD recently formed by the democratic Salvadoran trade unions, and the continuing activity of the UPD." [62]

Left Unions Rebuild.

The early months of 1985 marked a period of cautious rebuilding by the left unions. The previous year had seen a growing militancy among public sector workers in particular, forefronted by the left Christian Democratic Salvadoran Workers' Central (Central de Trabajadores Salvadorenos -CTS). The strike activity of the CTS had posed the first major problem for Duarte following his election. [63] Many unions, however, continued to operate in a semi-clandestine fashion. In November 1984 125 FENASTRAS delegates held a secret conference at the University of San Salvador. Six international observers from Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. also attended. One U.S. unionist, Jerry Olivera, reported that the conference proceeded with delegates taking turns keeping watch on the roads approaching the University. Olivera, an aircraft mechanic from the Virginia State Council of Machinists wrote, "I spent five days in El Salvador. The situation there is more desperate than anyone can imagine." [64]

The formation of the left solidarity coalition CST in late 1984 triggered further organizational initiatives. In the public sector water authority (ANDA) workers (Sindicato Empresa de Trabajadores de ANDA -SETA), hospital workers (STISSS), teachers (ANDES), bank workers (SIGEBAN), municipal workers from Santa Ana (Asociacion de Trabajadores Municipales de Santa Ana -ATRAMSA), and others formed the Coordinating Council of State and Municipal Workers (Consejo Coordinador

de Trabajadores Estata las y Municipales -CCTEM). The formation of CCTEM gave a clue to the frustration in the public sector, which in El Salvador had traditionally been politically neutral or supportive of the government [65] Both the CST and the CCTEM called for Government-FMLN dialogue to end the war.

Left unions also regrouped in the rural sector. The Agricultural Workers Union of El Salvador (Sindicato de Trabajadores Agricultura, Simitares y Conexos Salvadorenos - SITAS) and the Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (Confederacion de Asociaciones Cooperativas de El Salvador -COACES) became active during this period. [66]

One should note that the regrouping of these organisations in the public, private, and rural sectors involved the participation of several unions (particularly in the public sector) who had traditionally avoided contact with unions clearly associated with the left, a sign that Duarte's failure to implement many aspects of the Social Pact and the crisis in the UPD had weakened the appeal of the moderate unions sponsored by AIFLD. Meanwhile, the U.S. press continued to follow AIFLD and the UPD. The New York Times reported in June that the UPD "...has been in uproar over efforts by the Washington-based American Institute For Free Labor Development to confine it to bread and butter issues." [67] The Los Angeles Times quoted the "maverick" leader of the agricultural workers union UCS, Ramon Mendoza, as saying that, now Duarte was elected, "Suddenly we're not of use to

the Americans anymore." [68] Further evidence of centre unions distancing themselves from AIFLD came with the formation of the May First Committee (Comite Primero de Mayo). The CTS joined FENASTRAS, FUSS, FESTIAVTSES and the CCTEM on the Committee, thus cementing an organisational link between the two otherwise distinct trade union groupings in El Salvador.

The May First Committee planned for a union demonstration in San Salvador for May Day 1985. In an April 27 press conference the Committee was filmed by the government-owned Channel 10 television station. Channel 10 attempted to reduce the size of the demonstration by accusing the Committee's members of being in league with the FMLN. [69] An estimated 20,000 workers participated in the demonstration, demanding higher wages, freedom of political prisoners, and negotiations to end the war. During the event, helicopters flew overhead and speakers and marchers concealed their identity with baseball hats and sunglasses. The following day two members of the water workers union, SETA, were found murdered. [70]

A number of significant strikes occurred in the period leading to and following the May Day demonstration which seemed to indicate that the Social Pact was disintegrating. According to one estimate 40,000 workers struck in May alone. [71] Furthermore, AIFLD's activities in El Salvador continued to attract controversy. In April AIFLD had reportedly cut off funds to the UPD. [72] An AIFLD official, John Heberle, told

the Maimi Herald that the UPD had played "a useful role" but was now "off to the left of Duarte." [73] In a letter to Lane Kirkland on April 2 UPD General Secretary Mendoza accused AIFLD of arranging dummy conventions, buying-off union leaders, and using "anti-democratic destabilizing methods and blackmail against democratic trade unions." [74] On April 29 a letter was sent by the Political Committee of the UPD to President Reagan. Signed by representatives of several affiliated unions, the letter attacked AIFLD for "the misappropriation of funds..(to)..try and destroy the UPD by blackmail" and of "armed aggression and persecution." The letter also stated, "We believe this attitude is not in accordance with (presumably U.S.) Government policy, or, for that matter, AFL-CIO policy." The Political Committee suggested that AIFLD should be forced to discontinue its activities and "the (U.S. Government) funds earmarked for the development of a democratic labor movement be used in a proper direction." [75]

The FMLN's Trade Union "Strategy."

Towards the end of April 1985 the Salvadoran army reported that it had been involved in an armed exchange with a leader of the Central America Revolutionary Workers' Party (Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores de Centroamerica - PRTC), Ms. Nidia Diaz. Diaz, who was wounded in the incident, was the most senior rebel commander to be captured by the

army. The army claimed that they seized Diaz's personal diary, letters, plans of action, and minutes of meetings; all told, the complete archive of the PRTC, one of the five guerilla formations grouped within the FMLN. U.S. press interest in the documents was stimulated by information which purportedly linked the FMLN to the Sandinista Front. In addition, the documents were described as providing an unusually close look at the guerilla high command. [76]

In due course AIFLD intended to call attention to parts of the documents which the press had deemed less interesting. To the Institute the Diaz collection revealed a three-layer guerilla strategy pertaining to the trade unions in El Salvador. Firstly, the FMLN wished to establish a guerilla-controlled labour front to compete with the unions supported by AIFLD. The key organisations behind this effort would be FENASTRAS, FUSS, and FESTIAVCES. Secondly, the FMLN was committed to undermining the Social Pact and the UPD, which was then supported by AIFLD. This would be accomplished by several union leaders secretly working with the guerillas, referred to in the documents under a code name, "cocos". AIFLD claimed, "Although the identity of the individuals cannot definitely be established, the activities described in the documents relate to the actual events that contributed to the virtual dissolution of the UPD." Finally, the FMLN was determined to promote strikes and work stoppages in individual industries to provoke an economic crisis. Agents of the guerillas had penetrated the unions in transportation, the

water industry, the coffee sector, and other areas where they had sometimes been successful in leading strikes. None of these strikes, claimed AIFLD, "served a traditional trade union purpose." [77]

AIFLD claimed that the documents provided a revealing insight into the struggle between Marxist-Leninist and democratic unionism. Significantly, AIFLD also made it clear that the battle in the AFL-CIO itself over Central America was inseparably part of the same struggle. As the Institute expressed it, the documents were "essential for understanding labor events reported in the press, and for interpreting the claims of certain travelling 'Salvadoran labor leaders' who make appeals to U.S. trade unionists for labor solidarity against human rights abuses. Such appeals, however compelling they seem at first glance, serve a hidden agenda." Furthermore, "U.S. citizens have good reason to be wary about involvement in 'solidarity committees' for the kind of Salvadoran 'unions' that serve as fronts for the guerilla groups that produced these documents." [78] AIFLD spelled out the difference between a "front" union and a legitimate one: "To most U.S. citizens, labor unions are supposed to work to improve the standard of living and working conditions of members by representing them effectively before employers and political institutions. To the guerillas in El Salvador, unions serve a radically different purpose...The FMLN's labor plan had nothing to do with collective bargaining, economic improvements, and other changes traditionally supported by

trade unionists." The guerillas, claimed AIFLD, saw unions as part of "the economic struggle within the structure of bourgeois legality...preparing the terrain for insurrection in coordination with the military offensive of the FMLN." [79] Revolutionary unionism was also considered to be illegitimate because it involved the clandestine entry of unions by hardened revolutionary cadres, who then manipulated legitimate trade union grievances to achieve political ends formulated by non-unionists, that is, the FMLN.

Leaving aside the issue of the authenticity of the documents, AIFLD's response to their contents was revealing in a number or respects. Firstly, the only legitimate trade unionism seemed to be that which conformed to the understanding of "most U.S. citizens." Clearly, the understanding of Salvadoran workers of trade unionism, in the context of their own political choices, history, and culture, was not the guiding principle. Secondly, and more important, the applicability of "U.S. unionism" to El Salvador was not considered at all problematical, despite the presence of death squads and an intransigent oligarchy in a country crippled by war and economic crisis. Thirdly, AIFLD's view that Duarte's democracy was being subverted by a handful of "cocos" pursuing their own insurrectionary agenda conveniently sidestepped the question of the Salvadoran government's inability to prevent the radicalisation of certain sectors of the trade union movement by responding favorably to the "legitimate" demands of the infiltrated unions. The Salvadoran left maintained

that fifty years of peaceful struggle had not improved the lives of the Salvadoran workers and peasants and had cost the lives of 80,000 people. The only progressive option was to defeat, through force of arms, the oligarchy and its supporters in the military. If AIFLD and the pro-Government union leaders could not advise how long it would take Duarte's fledgling democracy to ease the misery of the workers, the revolutionary left could point to the repeated failures of reformist methods that some of its own supporters had once endorsed. If AIFLD and its union leaders could not precisely guarantee that the death squads might not someday unleash a repression like that of 1980-83, the revolutionary left contested that such a backlash was a certainty given the experience of Salvadoran history since the Matanza of the early 1930's. Moreover, Duarte's first year had seen the President backtrack on the key clauses of the Social Pact and the military strengthened by U.S. aid.

There remained only one argument at AIFLD's disposal which had not been seriously impaired by events: that El Salvador under the control of the guerillas would usher in a situation infinitely worse than the one that presently prevailed. In the event of an FMLN victory, AIFLD and its allies maintained, the democratic process initiated under Duarte would be willfully smashed as part of a gradual systematic establishment of a totalitarian state along the lines of Cuba.

Duarte's Summer of Discontent.

In early May 1985 striking health workers at the Social Security hospitals began a peaceful occupation of their workplace. The action was led by the 3,000-member union Social Security Institute Workers' Union (Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto Salvadoreno -STISSS). During the 1970's STISSS was active in left union coalitions, although was never formally affiliated to any. In 1980 the union was close to the FDR and suffered badly as the repression unfolded. During the months leading to the occupation, STISSS had been instrumental in organizing the public sector union coalition CCTEM. The decision to strike was taken after a stalemate had occurred in negotiations over a union pay claim.

On June 1, the first anniversary of his presidency, Duarte stated: "We have become aware of strikes being carried out by labor unions and organizations. Strikes that, with the pretext of labor demands, have a background of indisputable political inclinations...Unions are channels for participation in the material and spiritual progress of the people. What cannot be accepted is that these channels be used and the needs of the people manipulated." [80] The day following Duarte's speech, with its oblique reference to the alleged contents of the Diaz documents, a U.S.-trained SWAT team were transported under the cover of night to the roof of the Social Security Hospital. Together with units of plain-clothed National Security police, they stormed the hospital on

presidential orders. In the confusion the SWAT team fatally shot four of the plain-clothed National Police who were bearing revolvers. Also, a thirty-year old patient whose emergency heart surgery was interrupted died, and a baby's incubator was disconnected, reportedly causing permanent damage to its occupant. Four people were arrested, including STISSS leaders Guillermo Antonio Rojas and Jorge Lara Albena. During the takeover of the hospital there were beatings of both hospital workers and patients. A strike leader stated: "There was a blackout, and the police arrived all in black and wearing gasmasks. During the invasion they were brutal with the doctors and nurses, alleging that they had guns. They made the women who had just had babies lie on the floor while they searched their beds for guns." Rojas described his capture: "We thought when we were arrested...that our union days were over. We thought we were going to be taken out and killed right there. But as time went on and we were still alive, we thought we might end up in Mariona. They started interrogating us immediately at the National Police H.Q.; we were blindfolded for the four days we were there barely sleeping at all, enduring constant interrogation. They tried to get us to admit that we were members of an underground organization. Over time I sensed that there was a lot of agitation going on outside regarding our case. The jailers said that the situation outside had become `difficult.'" [81]

The "difficult" situation had been created by strike action taken by workers in telephone and communications,

water, electricity, and the clinic facilities protesting the invasion of the hospitals. The next day the solidarity coalition CST called a demonstration. One source reported, "Despite prohibition by the army...more than 7,000 workers joined the protest." [82] The demonstrations did not die down until June 6 when the government agreed that the four arrested would be released and that the STISSS strikers would receive a pay increase if they agreed to call off the dispute. STISSS agreed and won assurances from Duarte that there would be no reprisals against the strikers.

UPD leaders condemned the military action ordered by Duarte against the hospital occupation. A communique issued following the incident stated: "No legalistic excuse can erase the damage inflicted on a sector of our people; (the) attempt to excuse this action by calling (the strike) communist inspired is not only untrue, but will only provoke the unification of the entire labor sector against the regime which looms as repressive as the former regime." [83] Duarte declared the act was legitimate because the FMLN had infiltrated STISSS. [84]

Duarte had accused the unions of being infiltrated by the FMLN on previous occasions. In July 1984, just weeks after his election, the defunct MUSYGES were labelled Marxist-Leninist and with the guerillas. [85] The armed forces also accused MUSYGES and FENASTRAS of having links with the "maximum leaders of the guerillas," and they, too, based their accusations on captured documents (although the

documents were captured from the unions, not the guerillas). Both federations had denied the charges and jointly stated that, "In El Salvador anyone who demands education, housing, health, and food, is a communist, and therefore persecuted until he or she is dead." [86]

The incident at the hospitals, however, marked a turning point in Salvadoran trade union politics. The government had demonstrated its willingness to deal violently with strikers, and both Duarte and AIFLD were in open agreement regarding what constituted legitimate and illegitimate trade union activity. In the context of El Salvador's ongoing political and economic crisis, however, even "legitimate" trade union actions constituted a threat to the regime and assisted the guerilla's stated objectives pertaining to the destabilization of the economy and the government. In other words the overall crisis made it virtually impossible to distinguish between "legitimate" trade union behaviour and "illegitimate" revolutionary actions because any serious pursuit of workers' economic and political demands could paralyse or overthrow the government.

Duarte's decision to repossess the hospitals occurred at a time when industrial unrest had increased considerably. In the first half of 1985 38 strikes were recorded involving 45,000 workers. For the whole of 1983, there had been only four recorded stoppages, with just 2,300 participants. In 1984 26,000 had taken strike action. [87] The increased degree of union militancy would not, however, pass with

impunity. During the first six months of 1985 ten trade union officers and members were either assassinated or "disappeared". Of the 26 unionists arrested during the period, at least eleven were subjected to torture, including beatings, asphyxiation to the point of vomiting and electric shocks. From January to September 1985 FENASTRAS alone suffered incidents involving 41 of its members being either terrorised or murdered by government forces. [88]

The period of the hospital strike coincided with increased belligerence on the part of the UPD towards AIFLD. On May 11 UPD leaders remaining outside the new CTD signed a paid advertisment in the Salvadoran newspaper La Prensa Graphica which referred to the leaders selected by AIFLD as "gold-plated scorpions, who with gold in their teeth attempt to buy off the consciousness of all honest workers in El Salvador." [89] Following the raid on the hospital relations between AIFLD and the UPD deteriorated further. In mid-June an official AFL-CIO delegation to El Salvador met with the leaders of the new CTD, ignoring the UPD altogether. [90] In early July the UPD convened a special assembly, electing Mendoza as its president. Following the event the UPD called on the AFL-CIO to establish, within 30 days, an investigative commission into the allegations and complaints made against AIFLD. If the AFL-CIO refused to act, the UPD would request the Salvadoran government to expel AIFLD from the country. [91]

Conclusion.

In the year following the election of the Christian Democrats in April 1984 the UPD's support for Duarte had seriously diminished. The new AIFLD-sponsored federation, CTD, was established amid protests from several UPD leaders who refused to join the new formation. AIFLD, accused of bribery and manipulative practices by the UPD, cut off funds to the federation it had earlier helped establish. By early 1985 the principal unions of the UPD had split into rival factions with AIFLD supporting one group against the dissidents.

This situation placed in severe jeopardy AIFLD's objective of consolidating trade union support for Duarte as a means of reinforcing the democratic opening. For the Reagan Administration and Congress, El Salvador, now a "fledgling democracy", was a foreign policy success. Duarte's victory had facilitated U.S. military aid to "professionalize" the armed forces who were now expected to move decisively against the FMLN. The deterioration of the Social Pact and the conflict in the UPD, therefore, simultaneously threatened the legitimacy of both AFL-CIO and U.S. Government foreign policy.

AIFLD maintained that the UPD crisis did not reflect a major or even significant diminution of Duarte's trade union support, that the whole affair amounted to little more than a turf battle between union leaders. Opponents of AIFLD's policies in the U.S. trade unions reached a different

conclusion: AIFLD had provided an important service to the U.S. Government by helping to elect Duarte. When the UPD asserted its independence and urged the implementation of the Social Pact agreements, AIFLD moved to set up a new federation (CTD) - a bureaucratic manoeuvre which put the needs of the U.S. Government above those of Salvadoran workers.

Two additional problems for the AFL-CIO's international policy lay in the regroupment of the left unions in El Salvador and in the initiatives taken by anti-interventionists in the U.S. trade unions pertaining to the situation there, particularly in the area of trade union rights. With the death squads and the military still murdering people, the city-committees and the NLC extended moral and political support to endangered trade unionists whose plight had been ignored by AIFLD because of their purported support for the FMLN.

Thus, the challenge to the international policy of the AFL-CIO in El Salvador during this period was made of three interrelated components: the involvement of the anti-interventionists, the regroupment of the left unions, and the crisis in the UPD. A central underlying factor behind the emergence of this challenge was the failure of Duarte to grant significant material reforms to Salvadoran workers. If Salvadoran capitalism had been in a position to raise living standards, the UPD would have sustained its support for Duarte, the left unions would have lost impetus and the success of AIFLD's policy (and that of the Reagan

Administration) would have arrested the rising tide of criticism directed at the Institute in the U.S. labour movement.

Chapter Six explores the role of leading Cold War unionists in the AFL-CIO in the Reagan Administration's effort to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

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CHAPTER 6

"A REVOLUTION BETRAYED": U.S. LABOUR AND THE WAR AGAINST NICARAGUA

The invasion of Grenada in October 1983 signalled an intensification of U.S. Government initiated measures directed against the Sandinistas. In November Congress approved $24 million in contra aid which was expected to last until June 1984. In the interim period the CIA embarked on numerous military assaults against Nicaragua; one such attack resulted in severe damage to the oil and storage facilities at San Juan del Sur. In January 1984 mines were deployed in three major Nicaraguan harbours, causing considerable damage to shipping and inflicting roughly a score of casualties. In early April the U.S. Senate approved an additional $21 million in contra aid. Congress criticised the CIA and the President for proceeding with military actions without its approval, although this did not seriously encumber the broad thrust of the Administration's anti-Sandinista project. The U.S. Government was more determined than ever to overthrow the revolutionary regime in Managua. [1]

The Reagan Administration's military and political intensification of the war against Nicaragua was also

reflected in the official policy of the AFL-CIO. The Federation's national bi-annual convention of October 1983 adopted a resolution that was unrestrained in its criticism of the Sandinista regime and referred to the jailing of seven dockworker union leaders for recommending that their union in Corinto - a location mined by the CIA - rejoin the AFL-CIO supported CUS. [2]

In its written presentation before the Kissinger Commission in September 1983, AIFLD echoed the complaints of CUS representatives that they continued to be victims of jailings and beatings. [3] By March 1984, however, Federation criticism of the Sandinistas became more detailed. William Doherty completed a report on the trade union situation in Nicaragua, which Lane Kirkland circulated to all AFL-CIO unions. The document should be used by union members, said Kirkland, "when they are confronted by the campaign of disinformation which has been undertaken by the Government of Nicaragua and their representatives and supporters in different parts of the world, and, especially, here in the U.S." [4] Kirkland claimed that the Report, entitled Nicaragua: A Revolution Betrayed. Free Labor Persecuted, provided documented proof that the Sandinistas were deliberately and methodically destroying free trade unionism in Nicaragua. Doherty's report presented brief descriptions of a series of FSLN-conducted-or-inspired incidents where unionists of the CUS and the "social christian" federation CTN were reportedly harassed. This harassment was interpreted as

an integral part of the FSLN's objective of bringing all the unions into a single national federation under its control.

The incidents reported by Doherty accused the Sandinistas of intimidation of trade unionists, rigged union elections, arrests for alleged counter-revolutionary activity and other infringements of trade union rights. The report also noted the affiliation of the principal Sandinista federation CST to the pro-Soviet WFTU in October 1980 and the introduction of the State of Emergency in October 1982. Under this decree strikes were banned, no collective contracts could be signed, and non-CST demonstrations or public meetings were disallowed. In all the cases cited, however, physical violence received only one specific reference, although it was not administered by a Sandinista soldier. In this case CTN leader Carlos Huembes was allegedly "attacked and brutally beaten by Sandinista thugs..He was taken to hospital and found to have a broken nose and deep lacerations about his body." [5] Interestingly, the incidents of harassment documented by Doherty were cited without significant alteration in a document released by the U.S. Department of State in October 1984 which attacked the Sandinista's human rights record. Further examples of mutual cooperation between AIFLD and the Department of State in the pursuit of anti-Sandinista objectives would emerge as time progressed. [6]

The FSLN's behavior towards certain trade unionists was also criticized by the ICFTU and the ILO. [7] Furthermore, Amnesty International (AI) recorded the detention of

unionists, particularly from the CTN, and declared that they believed some of the detained were prisoners of conscience and not "counter-revolutionary," as the Sandinistas had alleged. However, AI were more critical of the contras: "Reports were received throughout 1984 of detentions, torture, and summary executions by armed opposition groups...AI received a copy of a field manual issued to FDN contra forces which recommended the public `neutralization' of civilians believed to be collaborating with the Nicaraguan government as well as the selective assassination of local government officials, police, and military personnel." The FDN manual, "Psychological Operations in Guerilla Warfare" referred to the "use of violence for propagandistic effects." Meanwhile, the U.S. Government acknowledged that the CIA had issued the manual to FDN forces, and declared that the manual would be recalled and reissued without reference to `neutralizations.' [8]

The simple fact that AIFLD criticised the trade union record of the Sandinistas is not, in and of itself, convincing evidence that official AFL-CIO policy statements became another outlet for the anti-Sandinista propaganda of the Reagan Administration. Indeed, the ICFTU, ILO, and Amnesty International had voiced similar complaints. However, the crucial difference between AIFLD and other critics of the Sandinista's performance in this regard was that AIFLD remained totally silent in the face of mounting evidence of contra atrocities and muted in their response to the murder,

disappearance and torture of trade unionists in El Salvador. By any objective measure, the human and trade union rights record of the Sandinistas was much better than the corresponding record of the Duarte government, to say nothing of the genocidal character of the repression in El Salvador during 1980-83 which claimed the lives of thousands of trade unionists. It was this naked bias against the Sandinistas that AIFLD shared with the Reagan Administration, a bias reflected clearly in the policy positions of the AFL-CIO.

Anti-Interventionists Respond.

The National Labor Committee (NLC) began to respond to the Reagan Administration's campaign against the Sandinistas following the CIA's military actions. In March 1984 the NLC sent a letter to Congress which protested contra aid and the undeclared war against Nicaragua. In so doing it referred to how "The majority of Nicaraguans have rallied around their government and the U.S. has become morally isolated from the international community." [9] Nicaragua was now an NLC concern, despite the fact that the Committee was initiated around questions pertaining to developments in El Salvador. The NLC, however, was not prepared to publicly scrutinize AIFLD's charges against the Nicaraguan government pertaining to the abuse of union rights. Similarly, local anti-intervention activists involved in the city or state committees did not attempt to refute or explain AIFLD's

allegations, although Kirkland's allusion that the Sandinistas had erected an international propaganda network prompted one SEIU official in Pittsburg to write: "Apparently any discussion of U.S. labor's `foreign policy' concerning Nicaragua that does not originate from AIFLD falls under the title of `disinformation.'" [10]

Anti-interventionists returning from Nicaragua focused their attention on contra atrocities, a subject completely ignored by AIFLD and the State Department. In its report the Philadelphia union delegation to Nicaragua described how, "At a daycare center in Estelli, near the front, we were told of a recent contra attack on another nearby center, where several children were killed by mortar fire. The contras who launch such attacks are hired by the Reagan administration, and paid with our tax dollars." The U.S. Government was killing Nicaraguans, read the delegation's report, at a time when other countries were offering material assistance; "Holland is building a hospital near Matagalpa, Yugoslavia has donated ambulances, and Belgium sent sewing machines to a clothing cooperative we visited in Estelli." [11]

The Trade Union Peace Conference in Managua.

In April 1984 a major trade union event took place in Managua. Three-thousand delegates from 335 unions representing 68 countries converged on the city to participate in the Trade Union Peace Conference organised by the pro-FSLN unions in

Nicaragua under the umbrella of the Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council (Coordinadora Sindical de Nicaragua - CSN). [12] The conference, sponsored by the pro-Moscow WFTU, invited the CUS and the CTN as well as to the ICFTU and affiliates of the "social christian" federation, the World Confederation of Labor (WCL), from outside Nicaragua. Both the CUS and the CTN failed to endorse the conference.

Thirty officially endorsed U.S. trade unionists from seventeen unions attended the event; the group ranged from district directors to local presidents and members of local and regional executive boards. Richard Metcalf, Manager of the Twin City Joint Board of ACTWU Textile Division in St Paul, Minnesota, was spokesperson for the delegates. The group issue a statement: "We, with all our differences, are testimony here today, that Ronald Reagan does not speak for all of the people in the U.S...We know that it is the U.S. Government which is the main cause of the problems Nicaragua is experiencing." [13] The statement pointed to the irony of the AFL-CIO's official support for U.S. intervention given the attacks on the unions instigated and encouraged by the Reagan administration. Metcalf's report to Sheinkman expressed unreserved sympathy for the Sandinistas and lamented the current AFL-CIO policy of support for Reagan's policy in Central America. [14] Two statements were adopted by the conference were entitled, "The Declaration of Central America" and "The Managua Declaration". In condemning U.S. intervention, the conference agreed that practical trade union

internationalism was required to defend the Nicaraguan revolution; the representatives blamed "the present international economic order" for being "at the root of economic imbalances, wars, poverty and suffering," and called for "negotiated political solutions to conflicts." [15]

The objectives of the Managua conference appeared to be consistent with the WFTU's approach to both national and international trade union relations. The WFTU had stood for "unity of action" since its inception at the end of World War Two. In its ongoing political and ideological contest with its principal opponent, the AFL-CIO, the WFTU posed trade union unity as a counterposition to the AFL-CIO's total refusal to work with communist federations. The WFTU had already stated that such unity was particularly imperative in the developing countries, where, "the danger of setting the various contingents of the relatively small and weak working class against each other" could have very serious consequences. [16]

The Latin American section of the WFTU, the CPUSTAL, had made similar arguments since its formation in 1964. CPUSTAL called for fraternal cooperation between the ORIT and the "social Christian" Confederation of Latin American Workers (Condeferacion de Latinomerica Trabajo -CLAT). This unity, argued CPUSTAL, was necessary to put an end to dictatorial regimes, and to establish democratic governments capable of dealing with the general crisis in the region - demands which echoed the popular front perspective of the orthodox communist

parties throughout post-war Latin America. [17] The Sandinista CST, in particular, was known to be sympathetic to this view. [18]

To the AFL-CIO's Cold War adherents the objective of the WFTU initiative was quite transparent: the Managua conference was designed to be a showpiece for the section of the international trade union movement which registered unambiguous support for Soviet-Cuban positions in international affairs, attacked the U.S., and attempted to deflect attention away from, and thus delegitimize, the democratic trade union movement in Nicaragua. The U.S. trade unionists attending the conference had, therefore, performed a service for the forces of international communism.

Nicaraguan Elections and the Trade Unions.

The April trade union conference came shortly after the Sandinista government announced a general election would take place on November 4th, 1984. Following the February announcement, the anti-government CDN, otherwise known as the Coordinadora, which had earlier pressed for elections, announced that its participation depended on the willingness of the FSLN to negotiate with the contras. [19] The two contra groups, FDN and ARDE, declared they would cease hostilities if Arturo Cruz, the CDN/Coordinadora's candidate, and Sandinista-turned-contra Eden Pastora, were allowed to return to the country to participate in open elections. The

Sandinistas refused the accept these conditions and, on July 25, the CDN/Coordinadora withdrew from the elections, pulling the CUS and the CTN behind them. In early August Alphonse Robello's ARDE and Adolfo Calero's FDN signed an agreement joining their political and military organisations. [20]

Widely held suspicions that Cruz and the CDN/Coordinadora were operating under National Security Council (NSC) and CIA orders to discredit the electoral National Security Council (NSC) were later substantiated in several instances. [21] The NSC openly called for trade union leaders and other non-government officials to follow the lead of the Administration and the State Department and publicly denounce the elections. AIFLD and the DIA issued several statements which appeared to conform to this directive; the CDN/Coordinadora's decision to withdraw from the contest, they declared, had been determined by the undemocratic practices of the FSLN. Full use was made of a speech by a Sandinista commandante before a gathering of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (a Moscow-line party in the popular front tradition). Excerpts of the speech were reprinted in the Free Trade Union News as confirmation of the FSLN's Marxist-Leninist pedigree. [22] The speech by Bayardo Arce was reportedly not for wider consumption, but it was tape-recorded and eventually published by the Barcelona newspaper La Vanguardia in July. In the portions of the speech reproduced in the AFL-CIO's newspaper, Arce referred to the election as a hindrance, to the intention of the Sandinistas of "putting an end to all this artifice of

pluralism" and of the need to view the elections as a weapon of the revolution in the construction of socialism. [23] For AIFLD and the DIA the speech proved "that the objective of Nicaragua's revolution was to establish a one-party state on orthodox Marxist-Leninist lines." [24] Interestingly, (given accusations that AIFLD helped destabilize the Allende government) Arce's reference in La Vanguardia to the 1973 coup in Chile, where the democratic choice of the Chilean people was "reverse(d) by force," was omitted from the version that appeared in Free Trade Union News. [25] Perhaps the AFL-CIO's editors considered any reminder of the events in Chile to be an unnecessary distraction from the task of depicting the Sandinistas as undemocratic.

Anti-interventionist trade unionists visiting Nicaragua during the pre-election period, however, were unequivocally positive in their assessment of the election preparations. In September a twelve-person trade union delegation organized by the Labor Network on Central America, arrived in the country. The delegation included several local presidents and AFSCME vice-president, George Popyack. Once again, white collar and service sector unions predominated; four of the visitors were from the SEIU, two from AFSCME, and one each from the AFT, SAG, and the non-AFL-CIO ILWU. The delegation reported: "The Sandinista revolution has meant a thriving labor movement..There exists a diversity of organizations and political perspectives. We could not reconcile what we found with the official position of the AFL-CIO, that union

organizing and union rights are being suppressed; we found the opposite to be true." [26] Indeed, far from criticising the Sandinistas, the report attacked the CUS which had been awarded $194,000 by AIFLD in fiscal year 1984-85. "Placed in the context of the thriving trade union situation in Nicaragua, we would have to characterize the CUS as an anti-Sandinista propaganda organization, with a vanishing trade union base, plenty of money, and close political ties to all the traditional enemies of Nicaragua's workers." [27]

The report called for an end to U.S. intervention, for trade unions in the U.S. to "develop friendly relations" with Nicaraguan unions and support Nicaraguan workers in their efforts to rebuild their country, and it also urged the AFL-CIO to revise its position on Nicaragua and come out clearly against the contras and all forms of U.S. military intervention. [28] The West Coast delegation did not dismiss the complaints made against the Sandinistas by the CUS and the CTN. However, without significant exception, the explanations and justifications of the Sandinistas were accepted. The delegation clearly identified more with the problems and dilemmas of the revolutionary government than with the CUS and their complaints. Historically, the AFL-CIO explicitly rejected the notion that the monopoly of political power by the organisations of the working class was in any way a desired objective. This had been the view of the AFL even before the Bolshevik revolution; private capital and private property, if constrained by law, were essential for political

pluralism. In this view the post-revolutionary experience of Bolshevik Russia, and every other communist state since then, confirmed the wisdom of dispersed political power over a "dictatorship of the proletariat," and it legitimized the AFL's and later the AFL-CIO's implacable opposition to communism.

The West Coast unionists visiting Nicaragua, consciously or otherwise, were clearly not in step with this tradition. U.S. trade unionists who identified more with the Sandinistas than their trade union opponents in a sense represented a historical tendency in U.S. labour which envisioned a broader, social-transformatory role for the union movement. To them class-based trade unionism, even when formally linked to a political vanguard or party, deserved support; it was the purportedly narrow, racist, sexist, and otherwise exclusionary "aristocracy of labour" policies of the AFL-CIO that deserved to be criticised. Thus, the actions of the Sandinistas pertaining to the labour movement constituted a legitimate attempt to defend the transformatory project from the threat of extinction, a project supported by the bulk of the unions in Nicaragua.

The report of the West Coast delegation was well received by the rest of the anti-intervention movement. It's solidarity message was even more emphatic than the one which emerged from the Labor Notes tour of Nicaragua in September 1984, which described Nicaragua's labour movement as "dynamic and growing." [29] The Labor Notes publication, printed in

Detroit, generally reflected the views of a relatively extensive network of left trade union lower officials and activists across the U.S. and clearly endorsed anti-intervention activities and positions.

During this period the tension that existed between the nonintervention and the solidarity perspectives continued to simmer beneath the surface of trade union action around the Central America issue but showed no signs of developing into a major split. One activist criticized the West Coast report for not disclosing the full picture of Nicaraguan trade union politics: "In an understandable desire to counter the hostile propaganda directed against the Sandinistas, the Report tends to gloss over some of the genuine conflict and tensions within Nicaraguan labor. Union federations both to the left and to the right of the official Sandinist group have criticized pressures to create a single union centre controlled by the Sandinistas. Since each of the six competing union federations is linked to a political tendency, a single Sandinist-dominated federation would reduce the space for political pluralism in Nicaragua." [30]

The Nicaraguan Elections of 1984

The elections themselves saw the FSLN win 67% of the vote; 23% voter support was given to the two conservative parties, and 10% for the four parties standing to the left of the Sandinistas. Most international observers recorded a

positive verdict regarding the electoral procedures, although Reagan and the State Department maintained that the whole affair was merely "another step in the anti-democratic direction set by the FSLN". [31] In August 1984 the Sandinistas had announced that strikes in Nicaragua were no longer banned, one of a series of pre-election measures implemented to protect their international image from the charges emanating from Washington. AIFLD and the DIA viewed cynically the shift in the Sandinista position on strikes. AIFLD circulated a New Republic article by Robert Leikin which maintained that the Sandinistas lifted the strike ban because they feared a rash of wildcat stoppages resulting from declining real wages and other severe economic problems. Leikin wrote, "I found myself wishing that some of my fellow union activists had come with me to Nicaragua. They would have been as shocked and disappointed at the repressiveness of this 'government of workers and peasants' as I was." [32] According to former contra figure Edgar Chammorro, Leikin was actually a contra sympathiser attempting, with others, to garner support for the contra FDN among intellectuals in the U.S. [33]

Leikin's article had an impact beyond trade union circles. It received considerable press attention and was widely referred to by right-wing Democrats in Congress. Said one source, "More than any other single piece, Leikin's article shifted the contours of the debate over Nicaragua; for the first time, Democrats felt free to join the growing chorus

of complaints against the Sandinistas...The article took on special force from Leikin's assertion that he had once been a fan of the Sandinistas. For a former sympathiser to go public with his disillusionment caused a sensation." [34]

Despite the formal removal of the ban on strikes the Sandinista leadership exhorted the pro-FSLN unions to refrain from taking industrial action. According to a U.S. Embassy report from Managua, 106 leaders of the CST from the Managua area met on September 4 and approved a statement strongly criticising the use of the right to strike. Victor Tirado, the member of the National Directorate responsible for the trade unions, presided over the gathering. He asserted that, "in the current situation, strikes make no sense. They diminish production and weaken the revolution...the strike, as a weapon, as a political instrument of the working class, has passed into history...(workers) have to improve their work discipline, be more efficient and give all they can." [35] Five days later the CST held its Third National Assembly and once again rejected the use of strikes. The document approved by the Assembly described the strike as a method of struggle "used by the workers against their class enemies, the capitalist exploiters. There is no room for this type of struggle in Nicaragua because power is in the hands of the workers." [36]

Despite FSLN and CST appeals for industrial peace, a major strike occurred involving 1,500 brewery workers employed by a CST-organised beer company part-owned by the government.

CST leaders were officially sympathetic to the strikers pay demands but urged a return to work. The U.S. Embassy reported that other groups of workers demonstrated in support of the brewery workers and claimed the strike was only terminated after the Ministry of Labour threatened to make the stoppage illegal. The Embassy acknowledged that, in the ensuing negotiations, the workers were awarded a 70% pay rise. This period coincided with several attacks on the CUS and the CTN in the Sandinista press for incidents of sporadic industrial action. The non-Sandinista federations were castigated for being on the side of imperialism and the bourgeoisie. [37]

Divisions in the Opposition Unions.

Despite the call for greater sacrifices the FSLN's direction of the revolution enjoyed clear support from the bulk of organised labour in Nicaragua. In the opposition union federations, however, signs of disunity had become more visible. Divisions in the CTN had burst to the surface during 1982 when, at an Extraordinary Congress in November, a dissident group which had emerged around Antonio Jarquin were expelled following their condemnation of the "counterrevolutionary" direction of the federation. The Jarquin faction criticised both the FSLN and the right-wing anti-Sandinista coalition of business and political parties, Coordinadora, which was supported by the CUS and CTN leaderships. Jarquin's version of events differed from the

official CTN account; at a delegates' conference 80% voted to expel Huembes and his followers after Huembes had become vice-president of the right-wing CDN/Coordinadora. Now there were two groups claiming to the title of the CTN. However, the headquarters of the "social Christian" CLAT, based in Caracas, gave its endorsement - and thus its resources - to the more conservative Huembes faction. [38]

The issue of affiliation to the CDN/Coordinadora, and, by extension, support for the armed counter-revolution, also provoked a struggle inside the CUS. In August 1984 both CUS delegates on the Council of State reportedly called on the federation leadership to withdraw from the CDN/Coordinadora, which, they argued, was a coalition that defended the interests of Nicaragua's capitalists. [39] CUS dissidents reportedly telegrammed Lane Kirkland questioning the AFL-CIO's endorsement of CUS's decision not to participate in the November elections. One version of the story holds that the decision to leave the CDN/Coordinadora was taken by a conference of the CUS, but the leadership ignored the directive. [40] AIFLD contested that the Council of State representatives (See Chapter Three) behaved undemocratically; instead or arguing for disaffiliation at a full gathering of the CUS, they and a gang of twenty others occupied the CUS headquarters. Furthermore, in a detailed account of the incident AIFLD accused the dissidents of open collaboration with the Sandinista police. Following several days of occupation by the dissidents, the police occupied the

headquarters, an action which received letters of condemnation from Lane Kirkland and several national union centres and ORIT and the ICFTU. [41]

The occupation episode came at a time when the CUS's influence over Nicaraguan workers was becoming increasingly marginal. One observer generally sympathetic to the CUS recorded, "The CUS...appears able to withstand Sandinista repression as long as its united leadership continues to forge important international ties. While its importance in the workplace has declined drastically, the CUS's political role has increased significantly. The CUS leadership has chosen to participate as a political entity even while its influence in the labor field has declined to critical levels." [42]

Support for the CUS in the international labour movement also suffered notable setbacks during this period. The Socialist International's (S.I.) generally friendly disposition towards the Sandinistas had, because of the S.I.'s connections to the ICFTU, put the CUS at the centre of the controversy regarding the nature of the Sandinista regime (see Chapter Three). ICFTU affiliates closer to the AFL-CIO tended to characterise the CUS as a beleaguered bastion of democratic trade unionism. Those loyal to the S.I.'s formulations regarded the CUS with some suspicion because of its comfortable relationship to the Somoza regime. As in the case of the U.S. labour movement, union delegations returned from Nicaragua with picture of the trade union situation which stood in complete contrast to that transmitted to

international union audiences by Lane Kirkland and Irving Brown. Some union reports were more pro-FSLN than the S.I. itself. For example, a British NALGO-sponsored delegation to Nicaragua attended the trade union conference in Managua during April 1984. Its report, highly sympathetic to the FSLN, noted, "We were all aware that the CUS, an affiliate of the ICFTU, has links with the AFL-CIO and alleged links with American-backed contras." [43] The British TUC at its 1984 conference in Brighton unanimously passed a CPSA resolution which was completely uncritical of the Sandinistas, condemned the interventionist policies of the U.S. Government, and urged British unions to send material aid as one means of forging "direct relations with the broad trade union movement in Nicaragua." [44] The TUC had traditionally defended AFL-CIO foreign policy since the formation of the ICFTU in 1951; this resolution reflected a significant departure from the Cold War partnership between the AFL-CIO and their British counterparts.

Perhaps more worrying for the AFL-CIO were the events in the ORIT, the ICFTU's organisation for the American continent. ORIT met in April 1985 in Mexico, just days after the Reagan Administration had demanded the Sandinistas negotiate with the contras and hold new elections. ORIT adopted a resolution "emphatically rejecting" the U.S. Government's "ultimatum" to Nicaragua, declaring that such an order was tantamount to a virtual declaration of war. The resolution, introduced by the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC),

was opposed only by the AFL-CIO's delegate and AIFLD official, Jesse Freedman. [45]

CUS-AIFLD Support For Contra-FSLN Dialogue

The Reagan Administration's demand for FSLN-Contra negotiations was shared by the CDN/Coordinadora and faithfully echoed by the CUS before an ICFTU delegation visiting Nicaragua in February 1985. A group of 17 ICFTU representatives from the U.S., West Germany, Italy, Spain, Venezuela, Israel and Canada heard CUS's principal spokesperson, Alvin Guthrie, call for "national dialogue" to resolve the political crisis in Nicaragua. One month earlier, in January, the CDN/Coordinadora's chief political representative Arturo Cruz urged the U.S. Congress to resume military aid the contras. On March 2, 1985, contra leaders Adolfo Calero and Alfonso Robello signed a declaration in San Jose with Cruz and the CDN/Coordinadora which also called for national dialogue. Moreover, the declaration offered a ceasefire if the FSLN complied to the dialogue request. [46] AIFLD added its voice to the dialogue demand three days after the San Jose declaration when William Doherty appeared before the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. "The AFL-CIO," said Doherty, "viewed the armed insurgency against the Sandinista government as a consequence of Sandinista restrictions on freedom and human rights." [47] Doherty also criticised the Sandinistas for refusing to negotiate with

"their armed opposition" in the same spirit that Duarte was prepared to meet with his armed opposition, the FMLN. [48]

Doherty's sympathy for the contras caused him to qualify the AFL-CIO's position pertaining to regional peace proposals known as the Contadora treaty. The AFL-CIO, like the ICFTU, was officially behind Contadora, an agreement that emerged from a January 1983 meeting of foreign ministers from four Latin American countries, namely, Mexico, Columbia, Venezuela and Panama. The meeting at Contadora (a Panamanian island) issued a statement which urged the countries of Central America to "reduce tensions and establish a framework for a permanent atmosphere of peaceful existence and mutual respect...through dialogue and negotiations." [49] By September 1983 Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatamala and Costa Rica had agreed on 21 points necessary to establish peace in the region. The Contadora treaty itself formally came into ettect in September 1984 and was widely acclaimed as a realistic peace option for the region.

Doherty departed from the ICFTU's position when he qualified AFL-CIO support for Contadora: "A bilateral facet of our policy" (i.e., Kissinger's proposals) "should never be thought of as subordinate to the multilateral efforts" (i.e., Contadora.) This now "bilateral", now "multilateral" policy framework was excerpted directly from the Kissinger Report: the U.S. should "actively encourage the Contadora process (but) the U.S. cannot use the Contadora process as a substitute for its own policies." [50] The Kissinger Report

had been criticised by a number of ICFTU national affiliates and remained generally out of step with ICFTU sentiment. Doherty's statement in this instance illustrated the usefulness of AIFLD's formal independence from the ICFTU to the AFL-CIO international policymakers: ORIT (the ICFTU's organisation for the Americas) had criticised U.S. policy pertaining to Nicaragua and adopted a generally anti-interventionist posture resisted only by the AFL-CIO. Doherty now appeared before Congress and declared that the AFL-CIO should, when appropriate, pursue its own policy in Central America - a policy loyal to that of the U.S. Government and the anti-communist predilections of the AFL-CIO's DIA.

In their support for the dialogue position AIFLD and the CUS demonstrated their regard for the contras as a legitimate political force, one which should be empowered, politically and perhaps militarily, to fight the repressive and expansionist Sandinistas. AIFLD and the CUS, despite efforts to convey the contrary, were at this point more in step with the Reagan Administration, the CIA, and the U.S. Department of State than they were with both the spirit and the letter of the ICFTU regarding Nicaragua. The AFL-CIO was perhaps now as isolated in the international labour movement as it was before the onset of the Cold War. In 1961 ORIT voted almost unanimously to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. [51] ORIT's support for U.S.intervention had now virtually evaporated; only the AFL-CIO at this point refrained from open

criticism of the U.S. Government. Even the CUS and other smaller national federations more dependent on AIFLD's pecuniary assistance formally (although often ambiguously) opposed U.S. intervention.

The Sandinista government rejected calls for negotiations with the contras. During the period 1982-84 the U.S.-backed insurgents had killed more than 4,000 civilians and 3,300 government troops - an average of 43 Nicaraguans every day. Civilians killed by the contras included 134 children under the age of 12, 207 teachers, 18 doctors, and 184 technicians. Contra forces were said to have "systematically violated the applicable laws of war throughout the conflict. They have attacked civilians indiscriminately; they have tortured and mutilated prisoners; they have murdered (wounded soldiers); they have taken hostages, and have committed outrageous acts against personal dignity." [52] One contra atrocity committed on Boxing Day 1984 involved the massacre of a wedding party on its way home from the church. Six people died, including the bride. The material damage of the war, for 1984 alone, was estimated at $254.9 million. More than 30% of the cotton and coffee crop for the year had been lost. [53]

In early April 1985 President Reagan met with contra leaders Robello and Cruz. An additional $14 million in U.S. aid was made available to the insurgents for non-military purposes. In June 1985 the contra groups formed the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) under the leadership of Cruz,

Robelo, and Adolfo Calero, a former director of the Nicaraguan Coca Cola company and political leader of the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie during the pre-insurrection period. Former contra Edgar Chamorro later described Calero as someone "who had been working for the CIA in Nicaragua for a long time. He served as, among other things, a conduit of funds from the U.S. Embassy to various student and labor organizations." [54] The formation of UNO opened up a new period in the Reagan Administration's war on the Sandinistas.

The AFL-CIO and the UNO

The AFL-CIO had become linked to the contra cause through AIFLD's support of the CUS; the CUS were a component of the Nicaraguan political opposition to the Sandinistas, the CDN/Coordinadora. The CDN/Coordinadora had championed Arturo Cruz as its political representative, and Cruz had been open in his request for U.S. aid to the insurgency. Some U.S. trade union leaders were, however, at this point prepared to find a more direct way to assist the contras.

At a Washington press conference in November 1984 a group was launched which called itself the Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA). Cruz was featured at the conference and alongside him was a founding member of PRODEMCA, William Doherty. [55] PRODEMCA's board also included Max Singer, president of the Potomac Organization, a conservative business strategy consulting

firm. [56] In its Statement of Purpose PRODEMCA reiterated the underlying principle of AFL-CIO foreign policy: the extremists of left and right were the enemies of democracy. However, according to PRODEMCA, in Central America the principal threat to democracy came from the revolutionary left. With Soviet-Cuban support the totalitarians were tightening their hold on Nicaragua, "carrying out guerilla and terrorist attacks in other countries in the region, and building unprecedented military forces." [57] In the future PRODEMCA would play an important, perhaps critical, role in acquiring Congressional aid for the contras. Moreover, PRODEMCA provided a vehicle for trade union leaders to actively assist the contras even if the anti-interventionists were at some point successful in changing AFL-CIO policy on Nicaragua.

The creation of PRODEMCA needs to be seen in the context of the Administration's formal encouragement during this period of private efforts to assist U.S. government policy in Central America. [58] In October 1984, just weeks before the launching of PRODEMCA, Reagan declared that such efforts were "quite in line with what has been a pretty well established tradition in our country." [59] In April 1984, Reagan's National Security Advisor and supervisor of Oliver North, Robert McFarlane, decided to coordinate all private aid to the contras, and McFarlane appointed John Singlaub as a chief fundraiser. [60]

AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland chose not to openly identify with the contras, and his public statements were more guarded than Doherty's. When asked in March 1985 if he supported aid to the armed counter-revolution, Kirkland stated, "I don't think we should make a commitment that we are ill-equipped psychologically, politically, and otherwise to pursue...I am opposed to contracting out our defense and our security. If the threat is not sufficient to warrant our own defense of it, then its not that persuasive to me." Was the threat sufficient to warrant direct U.S. military involvement? Kirkland implied that it was. The Sandinistas were the source of a "great many problems in Central America. I think there is a serious problem of Soviet-Cuban involvement that is going to plague us for a long time." [61]

Reagan had himself by this point ceased expressing any faith in the civilian opposition to the Sandinistas, and the Administration prepared to ask Congress for a major infusion of aid. In March the President described the contras as "our brothers. And we owe them our help...They are the moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers." [62] On another occasion he described the Sandinistas as "infinitely worse" than Somoza. The political opposition had been "expunged" and democratic freedoms of speech, press, and assembly, had been rendered punishable by "officially sanctioned harassment, and imprisonment or death." [63] In April, however, Congress voted to deny the request for aid. On May 1st - international workers' day - Reagan announced that all commerce, navigation,

and air transport between the U.S. and Nicaragua would cease. "The government of Nicaragua," said the President, "constituted an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security of the United States." [64]

Another aid request, however, quickly followed. On Sunday, June 2nd, just days before the second Congressional vote, PRODEMCA took out a paid advertisment in the New York Times. The statement by PRODEMCA offered incontrovertible evidence that key union leaders supported the contras and therefore concurred with Reagan. The statement claimed, "The Sandinista rulers of Nicaragua are now seeking to impose a totalitarian system upon their people. They will not be deterred simply by humanitarian pleas, diplomatic appeals, or economic pressures. If the Sandinistas succeed, the Nicaraguan people will suffer greatly, and democracy throughout the Americas will face an unprecedented threat." The statement continued, "But the Nicaraguan democratic resistance movement can alter this dangerous course of events. Its leaders - figures like Arturo Cruz, Adolfo Calero, Pedro Joaquim Chamorro and Alfonso Robello - proved their dedication to democracy in their struggle against the Somoza dictatorship." For the signatories to the advertisment, the basic issue regarding U.S. policy toward Nicaragua was clear: "will we stand behind the Nicaraguan democratic resistance in its struggle against totalitarianism? Or will we declare that this movement is a lost cause, and offer only to help its supporters adjust to lives of victims, refugees and exiles?"

Of the 67 names appearing with the PRODEMCA advertisment, Doherty, Shanker of the AFT, Frank Drozak, the leader of the Seafarers union (SIUNA), and John Joyce the Bricklayers' (BAC) president, were from the trade union movement. Other names included Seymour Martin Lipset, a renowned sociologist and author of several publications related to trade unionism, veteran social democrat Sidney Hook, Michael Novak of the anti-union American Enterprise Institute; Penn Kemble, chairman for the Coalition For a Democratic Majority (CFDM) and president of PRODEMCA, and Rita Freedman, the Executive Director of Social Democrats USA. [65]

The story of national union leaders calling for contra aid even made the tabloids. The New York Post quoted Penn Kemble as saying, "There's been a big effort on the part of some labor leaders to support the revolutionary left in Central America for the last five years." Other union leaders, declared the PRODEMCA president, opposed this position and were now speaking up for democracy. [66] Kemble himself represented a section of the Democratic Party that commentators and activists referred to as "Cold War liberals." This significant segment of the Party's right-wing was supported by Cold War union leaders and was ideologically akin to Social Democrats USA. (In 1985 Kemble was national vice-president of SDUSA.) This section of the Democratic Party agreed with the anti-communist thrust of the Republican Party's foreign policy. As Kemble expressed it in a 1985 SDUSA paper, "The Reagan Administration has helped restore

the US as a world power...We (SDUSA) can help to build bridges between the labor movement and those Democrats and independents who stand somewhat to the right of labor on economic issues, but who also reject the social and foreign policy radicalism of the Democratic Party's Left." [67]

Kemble's own bridge-building efforts became a highly significant factor in the Congressional battle to secure military aid to the contras. In his view the anti-communists in the AFL-CIO, joined by like-minded Democrats, needed to be mobilized behind Reagan to support contra aid. Dissidents in the AFL-CIO would be castigated in the popular press and elsewhere as supporters of the totalitarian left in Central America. Although a blatantly untrue assertion, such accusations were intended to weaken the resolve of the less committed members of the NLC. Kemble, according to journalistic reports inspired by the Iran-contra scandal, met in March 1985 with three other Democrats, Bernard Aronson, one of President Carter's liason personnel responsible for relations with the labour movement; Robert Leikin, ex-Maoist and author of the influential New Republic article which payed particular attention to depicting the Sandinistas as repressive toward the unions; and Bruce Cameron, an escort of contra leaders to Washington in their pursuit to pressure Congress for aid. Cameron would eventually be brought into the services of Carl "Spitz" Channel, who would later receive an indictment for collecting tax-exempt money for the contras. [68]

The four Democrats, three of whom had operated politically within the orbit of the labour movement, were concerned that the President's rhetoric against the Sandinistas had had a negative effect on the prospects for Congressional support for aid. Reagan appeared obsessed by the Sandinistas; instead of focusing on their evils the President should, in their judgement, stress the "democratic alternative" and the good and positive aspects of the contras in order to pull moderate Democrats away from their more liberal colleagues who opposed the contra strategy. Working through the Oklahoma congressman, David McCurdy, the four impressed upon the President the need to adopt the PRODEMCA approach. Reagan complied. In the period preceding the second contra vote the President tailored his speeches in order to stress political rather than military solutions, human rights and freedoms, and the democratic calibre of the contra leaders. On June 13 the House approved the President's request for $27 million in aid to the contras by a resounding 64 votes. Aside from Kemble's manoeuvre, a factor in the size of the victory had been the visit in April of Nicaraguan President, Daniel Ortega, to the Soviet Union. The fact that Ortega had also visited several western European countries was ignored. Kirkland drove the point home: "Ortega's trip...it's just simply further confirmation of the orientation of that particular regime." [69] Significant as Ortega's presence in Moscow was, the initiative of the four Democrats was described by Time magazine as "the most effective step in changing

congressional minds" on contra aid. [70] Thus, PRODEMCA, supported by leading union figures and the Executive Director of AIFLD, helped ensure that a significant section of the labour movement leadership used their authority as workers' leaders to support the contras. More importantly, PRODEMCA's support was arguably decisive in securing $27 million towards continuing a covert war which had already claimed the lives of thousands of unarmed civilians.

The Democratic quartet (one source described them as the "four meddlers") [71] were also pursuing another objective. The contras themselves had to change. Through PRODEMCA Kemble and Doherty had formed a political relationship with UNO leader Arturo Cruz. AIFLD, during the period before the Nicaraguan elections in 1984, had supported the Cruz candidacy and his subsequent withdrawal from the contest, which he claimed was due to Sandinista harassment. The Washington Post (November 6, 1984) and the Wall Street Journal (April 23, 1985) later disclosed, however, that Cruz had been persuaded by the CIA to boycott the elections soon after he had joined the contras. The Post published portions of a "secret-sensitive" briefing paper by the National Security Council (NSC) which outlined a "wideranging plan to convince Americans (that the) elections were a sham." [72]

At this time much of the propaganda being used by the Administration had been produced by the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean (OPD). OPD worked closely with Oliver North, the NSC, and the

CIA. According to the New York-based Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting group (FAIR), the OPD planted "dozens of false stories in major media outlets aimed at manufacturing a `Nicaraguan threat'". [73] Several of the OPD stories and accusations were repeated by AIFLD, Kirkland, and other union leaders. One such story described how the Sandinistas were embarking on a disinformation campaign aimed at the U.S. public to build opposition to the U.S. Government's Nicaragua policy. Unionists travelling to Nicaragua on tours not endorsed by AIFLD were either victims of a well orchestrated and ongoing Sandinista propaganda exercise or conscious agents of Sandinista disinformation. Visiting Nicaraguan unionists who supported the Managua government (which meant everybody except the CUS and the CTN) were also depicted as agents of the Sandinistas. [74]

The AIFLD-Cruz connection was paralleled by a relationship forged between the Cold War Social Democrats USA (SDUSA) and Alfonso Robelo, another leading contra. The contra group, UNO, had been established in June 1985 and promoted by PRODEMCA. In a presentation to SDUSA, Robello claimed that the UNO stood for free trade unionism in Nicaragua, "And it is we (the UNO) who want and deserve the full support of liberals in the U.S." [75] Kemble and Cameron drafted a statement entitled "From a Proxy Force to a National Liberation Movement," which depicted the contras as an authentic popular force with democratic objectives. [76] The objective of the document was to help tilt the political

balance inside the contra camp away from Calero, who represented the Somocista contra army, the FDN, towards Cruz and Robelo who had a more respectable democratic record. The Kemble group reportedly convinced Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams to side with the civilians Cruz and Robello in their efforts to get the FDN dissolved. For the remainder of 1985, the four, especially Leikin, wrote a series of articles describing the Cruz-Robelo project. The "democratic resistance," he maintained, had to be broadened and violations of human rights and terrorizing the population in Nicaragua had to cease if the anti-Sandinista project was to win widespread support in the U.S. [77]

AIFLD's Allegations of Sandinista Repression of Unions Challenged.

AIFLD's pronouncements and the independent initiatives of Doherty and of union leaders through PRODEMCA had clearly made a major contribution to the contra cause. A consensus had been forged pertaining to the totalitarian status of the Sandinistas and the authentic character of the "Nicaraguan democratic resistance" which stretched from the AIFLD-DIA wing of the labour movement, through the Cold War Democrats, the Republican Party, the White House, the State Department and the CIA, to the anti-union right wing both inside and outside Congress. The union leaders who were part of that consensus were therefore in agreement with right-wing bodies like the

Heritage Foundation, the Committee on the Present Danger, and the World Anti-Communist League - organisations whose hatred of the Sandinistas could only be matched, perhaps, by their hostility to the labour movement.

One of the building blocks of this consensus had been accusations of Sandinista repression against the independent unions in Nicaragua. Doherty's report, A Revolution Betrayed: Free Labor Persecuted, had been widely circulated following its release in April 1984. For example, in February 1985 the Report was inserted into the Congressional Record by Republican Senator David Durenberger from Minnesota, who declared that the Report documented "in stark detail the Sandinistas' efforts to destroy independent labor organizations in Nicaragua." [78] The report by the West Coast trade union visit organised by the Labor Network had made available the most succinct reply up to that time to AIFLD's characterisation of the Nicaraguan trade union situation. [79] However, the anti-intervention movement in the U.S. unions (and more generally) had yet to match Doherty's detailed allegations with an equally detailed response. In December 1984 the National Lawyers Guild sent a nine-person delegation to Nicaragua with the specific mission of cross-examining the Doherty report of March 1984. Three of the nine were employees of the National Labor Relations Board, and six were attorneys representing a variety of unions, including many affiliated to the AFL-CIO. In April 1985 the report of the lawyers delegation was released under

the title, Are Nicaragua's Trade Unions Free? A Response to the American Institute For Free Labor Development. [80]

The lawyers claimed that most cases of repression cited in the report were either fictitious or exaggerated. The report bore the appearance of a careful case-by-case dissection of the charges against the Nicaraguan authorities, which pointed to "significant disputes with regard to virtually every allegation of trade union repression in Nicaragua" [81] and "numerous examples of exaggerated and possibly fraudulent accusations of Government repression made by the CUS and the CTN to the ILO and other human rights organizations." [82] The Doherty report was, therefore, "a grossly inaccurate and misleading document." [83] Furthermore, the lawyers explicitly rejected the accusation that Nicaragua's union movement was moving in the direction of the Soviet model or that the activities of the CUS and the CTN were analogous, as AIFLD had suggested, to those of Solidarnosc in Poland. A more appropriate analogy for the "young, dynamic and expanding labor movement in Nicaragua" was, they suggested, the early organising drives of the CIO where there had been intense competition between unions. Tensions among Nicaragua's unions, however, had been "heightened by the CUS and CTN's alignment with the violent counterrevolution (which had resulted in) spontaneous, popular expressions of opposition to the CUS and the CTN - actions beyond the control of the government." Furthermore, the failure of the CTN and the CUS "to share in (the) dramatic

growth in trade union membership" was attributable to the widely held belief that they were "weak and inefficient company unions rather than to any systematic government repression." As for the pro-Sandinista federations such as the CST and ATC and their relationship to the government, this was depicted by the lawyer's report as somewhat similar to that of the AFL-CIO's relationship to the Democratic Party. Moreover, both the ATC and the CST were said to be opposed to the suspension of the right to strike but accepted the restriction because of the contra aggression. [84]

The report immediately became an important tool in the hands of the anti-interventionists. However, the report originated from the periphery of the labour movement, unlike AIFLD's publications which carried with them the official weight of the AFL-CIO. Nevertheless, the seriousness in which AIFLD greeted the report testified to the Institute's apparent concern to maintain an unambiguously negative image of the Sandinistas on the trade union question. By the end of August 1985 AIFLD had produced an even more detailed and lengthy sequel to the 1984 report "A Revolution Betrayed". The new document, entitled Sandinista Deception Re-Affirmed: Nicaragua's Cover-Up of Trade Union Repression, began by criticising what was described as Sandinista-organised visits of U.S. trade unionists to Nicaragua. [85] In language which echoed that used by Oliver North's Office for Public Diplomacy inside the Department of State, these unionists were charged with "outright deception" for not conveying the poverty wages

of the Nicaraguan workers. Visiting unionists, it continued, "are detoured around the market-place, where they are certain to be exposed to outraged vendors of housewives complaining about the purchasing power of the cordoba (the Nicaraguan currency) in real terms." The participants on the Labor Network tour in 1984 were described as "those who have concerted with the Sandinista government (in spreading) distortions and disinformation." [86] AIFLD criticised the lawyers' report for relying heavily on information provided by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Labor; the Ministry's version of events was cited no less than thirty times. Furthermore, the so-called independent newspaper La Prensa had not been consulted, and the complaints made by the ICFTU delegation to Nicaragua in November in 1982 had not been addressed. [87] The lawyers also allegedly misrepresented the findings of Amnesty International and sidestepped completely the question of the CST's affiliation to the WFTU. Pertaining to individual cases of repression, AIFLD retracted none of its earlier evidence. More than this, AIFLD proceeded to present case descriptions of further allegations of Sandinista harassment of the CUS and the CTN that had emerged since the publication of "A Revolution Betrayed." [88]

In October the lawyers produced an open letter to AIFLD. [89] It argued that they had not been hoodwinked by the Sandinista government, that they set their own agenda and had been free to walk around and talk with anyone they pleased. Attempts to talk to business people and La Prensa had not been

thwarted by the government. The extensive use of Ministry of Labor information, they claimed, testified to the "failure of international delegations to specifically substantiate the charges." AIFLD's criticisms of the Report were described as "little more than a feeble attempt to divert attention away from the plain fact that the original AIFLD report was replete with significant errors." AIFLD's position, argued the letter, had virtually no support among Nicaraguan workers and "the greatest hypocrisy of all is AIFLD's refusal to acknowledge that Nicaragua is at war." AIFLD was also accused of misrepresenting the CUS over the question of the contras. CUS leaders had stated their clear opposition to the contras, but AIFLD had implied that CUS did not unconditionally oppose aid to the insurgents. (AIFLD had stated that, "the CUS refuses to condemn those unionists who have chosen the path (of armed resistance as opposed to) civilian non-violent opposition." [91]

Clearly, ideological leanings and political motives were as obvious a part of this exchange as they were in the majority of exchanges pertaining to the Central American war. This notwithstanding, it was nonetheless the case that AIFLD's charges against the Sandinistas, which had reverberated uncontested (in any detailed way) throughout international trade union circles and world opinion as a whole, were now challenged by carefully documented evidence. Therefore, the lawyers report, while less widely circulated, marked a qualitative breakthrough for anti-intervention trade unionists

in the U.S. and beyond. Despite this achievement, the report itself failed to convincingly handle AIFLD's accusation that the lawyers frequently only cited the view of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Labor and were therefore prepared to accept official Sandinista explanations. The lawyers' attempt to dismantle AIFLD's prosecution of the Sandinistas, case by case, detail by detail, was in this sense only partially successful.

However, in the area of substantive political and human rights issues, the arguments of the lawyers exposed AIFLD's own disinformation and double-standards. By focusing on the aggression against Nicaragua, and the support of AIFLD and top union leaders for that aggression, the lawyers left AIFLD to complain about relatively minor infringements of union rights and the grumbling of street vendors. Amnesty International's 1983 report stated that unionists arrested by the government were seldom detained for more than a few days. Similarly, AI's 1984 report referred to "many supporters" of legal political parties and trade unions who were held for periods ranging from several hours to over one months' incommunicado detention before being released without charges. [92] However, the 1984 report continued: "While certain trade union activities, including strikes and stoppages, were banned under the prevailing state of emergency and punishable under the Public Order Law, AI was unaware of any trade unionists having been detained or prosecuted under these provisions. Charges were generally reported to have been based on allegations of

collaboration with violent opposition groups, or involved with specific acts of sabotage or terrorism within the terms of the Public Order Law." [93]

AI, unlike AIFLD, also investigated the behavior of the contras, citing evidence of "armed groups based in neighboring countries regularly carried out the execution-style killing of individuals captured in Nicaragua..In some cases prisoners were reportedly tortured and mutilated before being killed. [94] The lawyers' report also put into perspective AIFLD complaints about Sandinista harassment. "In El Salvador," they noted, "many union leaders are in jail or dead; in Nicaragua no labor leader has been killed and the leadership of the CUS and the CTN are not in jail. Indeed, they have representatives touring the U.S. and giving speeches critical of the Nicaraguan government." [95]

AIFLD's principal line of defence against the damaging political allegations made by the lawyers report concerned Sandinista intentions more than their actual behavior. The U.S. Department of State had translated and circulated an FSLN internal document which recorded the proceedings of a three-day gathering of FSLN leading cadres in September 1979, just weeks after the fall of Somoza. The document, entitled Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista's People's Revolution (or "72-Hour Document") was sub-titled by the Department of State "The Sandinista Blueprint For Constructing Communism in Nicaragua." [96] AIFLD, using similar terminology, considered the document to be "a

blueprint for the complete subjection of workers' organizations in the FSLN's state." [97] For AIFLD the totalitarian objectives of the Sandinistas not only pre-dated the formation of the contras, but made the contras a thoroughly legitimate movement of anti-totalitarian resistance. Therefore, while the lawyers report to some extent redeemed or put into perspective the Sandinista record, it did not confront or attempt to interpret the "72-Hour Document" or the CST's affiliation to the WFTU. This partially reflected the way many anti-interventionists came to view their political role: for them the issue was not what U.S. unionists, acting as referees, read on the Sandinista scorecard. The issue concerned the right of a people to self-determination.

Yet the contents of the 72-Hour Document did reveal a number of important things about the Sandinistas. The Document itself conveyed the Sandinista's commitment to prevent the revolution from being overturned, by pulling the mass organisations behind their political authority. It outlined a strategy to prevent the establishment of "somocism without Somoza" in Nicaragua following 1979. Interestingly, the State Department's preface to the translated document registered apparent surprise that the FSLN "actually believed" that, in the words of the FSLN statement, "the true enemy we would have to confront was the imperialist power of the United States." It was as if the State Department authors were themselves unaware of the history of U.S. armed intervention

in Nicaragua and the entire region, or that this history might cause the FSLN to politically prepare themselves for what they perceived to be an imminent U.S.-inspired destabilization efforts. The 72-Hour Document indicated that the FSLN anticipated the AIFLD-supported CUS would support the counter-revolution. (Indeed, just prior to the insurrection, the CUS was the only trade union formation which still supported the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie and its call for the U.S. Government to mediate in negotiations between Somoza and his opponents. See Chapter Three.) Despite this (accurate) prediction, there was no indication that the FSLN intended to eradicate its trade union opponents. [99]

The Nicaraguan Ministry of Labor also responded to AIFLD's accusations. [100] It denied that "the FSLN's National Directorate has insisted that all trade union centrals join the CST," and pointed out that during the Somoza era only the CUS, CTN and Somoza's own CGT were allowed to exist. "A new type of unionism," said the Ministry, had become available since 1979 - and it was this that Nicaraguan workers wanted. The CUS had only joined the struggle against the dictatorship at the last minute "at a time when no-one, not even the American government, would have given a cent for Somoza." [101] Furthermore, before this date, "they (the CUS) never questioned the Somoza dictatorship..and maintained excellent relations with somocista officials." [102] Unions could affiliate with whom they pleased, wrote the Ministry, but, "the Revolutionary Government is not responsible if

Nicaraguan workers know that the CUS and the CTN's leaders have sold out to the owners, and that they receive daily instruction from the...American Embassy. This type of behavior is not well received..(.) If the large majority of workers decide to affiliate to the CST, they have the right to do so and no DOHERTY has the authority to tell them who they should affiliate with...The organization of which he is director (AIFLD) has not been able to make the Yankee government..respect the rights of North American workers. MR. DOHERTY has mistaken the enemy; the battle must not be waged against a popular, workers' revolution but against his government, against Reagan, who represents the darkest interests of the North American monopolies which exploit and oppress the North American worker." (Blocks in original). [103]

Conclusion.

The support of the contras registered by leading U.S. trade unionists during this period testified to the extent a section of the U.S. labour leadership was prepared to take their Cold War sentiments. The postwar history of AFL-CIO's policy in Latin America indicated that, to these leaders, if reforms were not sufficient to derail revolutionary movements, the labour movement must endorse or condone military intervention to prevent communism being established. While the AFL-CIO stressed the need for right-wing regimes to

democratise themselves, support for U.S. military intervention to fight communism did not depend on the U.S. government first trying to intercept revolution by trying to influence change. The AFL-CIO viewed the U.S. Government's historical lack of vision in this area as regrettable but not sufficient to disqualify an Administration from trade union support for whatever action (covert or overt) it felt was necessary to repel communist expansion. Furthermore, there could be no thought of acquiescing to the totalitarians by fatalistically accepting that revolutions were inevitable, irreversible, or both. The only thing that was certain regarding communism was its repressive character. As a leading protagonist of Cold War unionism expressed it, "Communism is a system based on terror and total power. Post-revolutionary Vietnam, Cambodia, etc, confirmed the full horror set in motion by the Russian Revolution." [104] For Kirkland, Doherty, Shanker, and other like-minded trade union leaders the Sandinistas and the Khmer Rouge were essentially indistinct from each other; both had the objective of eliminating their political opposition and would pursue any means for it to be achieved. In their view the Sandinistas had not succeeded, yet, in constructing a totalitarian society but surely intended to do so. Kirkland, et. al., now shared with Reagan a desire to prevent the people of Nicaragua being reduced to slavery by the Sandinistas.

By mid-1985 internal opposition to Sandinista rule remained relatively unthreatening. The Reagan Administration threw everything behind an effort to provide military aid to

the armed counter-revolution, convincing Congress that the contras were a legitimate democratic alternative to Sandinista Marxism-Leninism. The evidence presented above demonstrates clearly that AIFLD and a section of the AFL-CIO leadership actively assisted the Reagan Administration in achieving this end. By disseminating (and, in the area of trade union rights, helping to compose) anti-Sandinista propaganda emerging from Oliver North's OPD office in the Department of State, AIFLD and the DIA, in an unquantifiable but nonetheless significant way, helped turn Congress towards supporting Reagan's military objective. Such an objective was not only emphatically opposed by the AFL-CIO's sister federations in the ORIT and ICFTU, it was also opposed (as opinion polls consistently indicated) by the majority of the U.S. public. [105] Moreover, the formation of the pro-contra lobbying group PRODEMCA witnessed the alliance of certain union leaders with the anti-union Republican right-wing. PRODEMCA leader Penn Kemble (a key figure in SDUSA) and other right-wing Democrats with trade union connections (Aronson and Leikin), the evidence suggests, helped North, the CIA, and the Reagan Administration "re-package" the contras in a manner more acceptable to Congressional moderates. Indeed, some sources (cited above) claimed that this intervention contributed decisively to the shift in Congress towards the contras.

This period also witnessed attempts by PRODEMCA, AIFLD and the DIA to explain trade union opposition to the contras, and anti-intervention activities in the unions more generally,

as an integral part of a Sandinista disinformation campaign aimed at the U.S. public. It would later be revealed that this accusation, a standard "red-baiting" method, also came directly from North and the OPD.

The anti-interventionist elements in the U.S. trade unions were, by comparison, peripheral to the debates on Capitol Hill. However, considerable headway was being made in other areas. Chapter Seven documents the momentum and extent of the anti-interventionist challenge to AIFLD and the DIA in the period leading to the AFL-CIO's full Convention in October, 1985.

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10. Paul Garver, untitled typescript essay, 1985 Unpublished.

11. Report of the Philadelphia Labor Committee, Untitled. August 1, 1984.

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Labour Imperialism or Democratic Internationalism? U.S. Trade Unions and the Conflict in El Salvador and Nicaragua, 1981-1989

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CHAPTER 7

U.S TRADE UNIONS 1985: THE CONTROVERSY SHARPENS

The re-election of President Reagan in November 1984 predictably resulted in the intensification of the political and military war against Nicaragua in 1985. Aid to the contras, the economic embargo and other measures ensured that Nicaragua remained the principal foreign policy concern of the Reagan Administration as it entered its second term. In the U.S. trade unions anti-intervention work registered steady advances. The city-committees continued to function and the NLC maintained a certain identity, although the precipitous decline in Congressional and media attention to the situation in El Salvador following the election of Duarte threatened the political existence of the Committee. As explained in earlier chapters, the NLC majority held serious reservations regarding the Sandinistas. Later this became more evident when some NLC members made statements which seemed to put them simultaneously in a position of supporting both AIFLD and the NLC.

This chapter documents the growing internal challenge to U.S. Central America policy and Cold War unionism in the

AFL-CIO during 1985, a challenge that culminated into a major confrontation between anti-interventionists and DIA loyalists at the Federation's full convention in November. As is evidenced below, the traffic of trade unionists to and from Central America increased markedly during this period, a factor which helped sharpen the differences between the two camps. It is important to note that at the full convention and at several state AFL-CIO conventions that preceded it no issue provoked more controversy and discussion than Central America - this at a time when the labour movement faced the spectre of three more years of a hostile Republican Administration and growing political marginalisation in the Democratic Party.

The Second National Labor Committee Tour of Central America.

The NLC, with 21 union leaders now on its letterhead, conducted its second tour of Central America in February 1985. In June 1983 the NLC had organised a tour of El Salvador and the visitors returned with a perspective of events that strongly contradicted accounts made available by the Reagan administration and AIFLD. Thirty-five thousand copies of the tour's report, El Salvador: Labor, Terror, and Peace, were circulated. [1] The second NLC tour returned to El Salvador but this time travelled on to Nicaragua. Duarte's election and the military containment of the FMLN had dispelled Congressional anxieties regarding El Salvador, although the

conflict in the Salvadoran unions did receive some attention in the U.S. press. Nonetheless, in 1985 it was Nicaragua that captured most attention.

Several union leaders made the trip, most notably ACTWU's Secretary-Treasurer Jack Sheinkman, AFGE's president Kenneth Blaylock, and Keith Johnson, president of the woodworkers (IWA). Also on the delegation was the president of UAW Local 909, Frank Hammer, brother of the AIFLD worker who had been assassinated in the Sheraton Hotel by right-wing death squads in 1980 (see Chapter Three) and AFSCME vice-president Victor Gotbaum (a visible opponent of the Vietnam War). [2]

The arrival of the visitors in El Salvador coincided with deepening splits in the AIFLD-sponsored UPD over Duarte's failure to honour pre-election agreements known as the Social Pact, and with AIFLD's decision to form a new federation, the CTD (See Chapter Five). AIFLD's representatives in the country refused to meet with the visitors, and an atmosphere of union repression - and resurgence - surrounded the tour. [3] Just days before the delegation arrived a transport workers union official was machine-gunned to death as he stepped from his taxicab. He had been involved in two recent strikes. Another officer in the same union was assassinated outside his home the day after the U.S. delegation arrived. [4]

The report released by the NLC delegation, The Search For Peace in Central America, noted that the resurgence of

union activity in El Salvador could be attributed to the "trade unions' spirit of defiance." [5] The land reform had been obstructed by the right-wing in the National Assembly and the judicial system, unlike the death squads, was not functioning. The report investigated the Salvadoran military's reported aerial bombardment of civilian locations, a subject not normally mentioned by AIFLD. Occupants of the refugee camp San Jose de la Montana recounted stories of indiscriminate bombing and shooting from helicopter gunships. Whole families were reportedly slaughtered, and hundreds of children in the camp were thought to be orphaned. According to the U.N., 2,285 civilians in El Salvador died from actions of the army and paramilitary groups, during "indiscriminate bombardment" in the first ten months of 1984. [6] U.S. aid, concluded the report, had not stopped "the widespread and systematic violation of human and trade union rights...In El Salvador, the army has the real power. It is controlled by the right." AIFLD's role in El Salvador, however, was not discussed. [7]

The NLC report then turned to Nicaragua, and contradicted AIFLD's characterisation of the trade union situation. Importantly, leaders of the CUS were again described as opponents of U.S. aid to the contras - this at a time when AIFLD and certain trade union leaders were clearly pressing for contra aid having cited, among other things, the valiant struggle of the democratic CUS federation. The report regarded as "particularly hypocritical" the complaint made by

the Nicaraguan business group (COSEP) that union freedom had been curtailed by the Sandinista's ban on strikes; Nicaraguan business under Somoza, noted the report, had not won any awards for their encouragement of strikes or unions. The report stated, "Although opposition unions in Nicaragua have occasionally been harassed, they have been allowed to exist and press their demands." [8] Criticisms levelled at the Sandinistas were mild in comparison with those expressed by AIFLD, although the report did echo Amnesty International's protests regarding the improper detention of civilians and the lack of due process in the popular courts. Nevertheless, the report concluded, "there is political opposition, free speech, thought and assembly existing in Nicaragua today." [9] The contras were unambiguously condemned.

The NLC's report was essentially a statement of critical support for the Sandinista revolution. The U.S. Government, suggested the report, should make available genuine aid to Nicaragua, without conditions. Present policy towards Nicaragua amounted to "an unwise self-fulfilling prophesy of cold-war fears..The U.S. has successfully denied Nicaragua access to Western aid sources, leaving them no alternative but to turn to Eastern Bloc suppliers. U.S. policy of aid to the contras has fueled the civil war, polarised the country, caused the government to become more hard line, and compounded Nicaragua's need for military aid. U.S policy is thus turning Nicaragua into a pawn in the East-West conflict." [10]

The NLC's policy recommendations were, as in 1983, directed at the U.S. Government, and not the AFL-CIO. By not criticising AIFLD and the DIA, the NLC again demonstrated its desire to avoid a clear split in the AFL-CIO over international issues. Moreover, several NLC members preferred not to publicly acknowledge that their position actually differed from Federation policy. AIFLD reciprocated by greeting the NLC's report with stony silence - in stark contrast to the voluminous, detailed, and highly charged response to the lawyers' report (See Chapter Six), even though the NLC's report had totally contradicted AIFLD's assessment of the situation in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The DIA and AIFLD did, nevertheless, demonstrate their concern in another way. No less than four official AIFLD-sponsored tours to the region were immediately scheduled; the DIA were clearly anxious that their view would prevail at the AFL-CIO's Convention in November. Suggestions that the convention might see a showdown between the contending forces within the leadership had already been raised. One NLC tour participant noted, "The days when a small group of right-wing staffers in the AFL-CIO make (foreign) policy and have it rubber stamped by the Executive Council are over. If they're not over, we intend to make sure that they are." [11]

The 10-person delegation organised by AIFLD went to Nicaragua and El Salvador in June, composed of mainly AFL-CIO officials from the Western states and officials in the CWA,

AFT, and the UFCW - unions that had shown themselves to be susceptible to the incursions of the anti-interventionists. The Trip Report by Western States' Trade Union Delegation to Central America attacked the Sandinistas for "their use of mass organizations, secret police, party-controlled newspapers and government run unions." The Sandinistas "were clearly moving towards totalitarianism...initial widespread support for the revolution has been replaced by feelings of betrayal and fear." [12] Betrayal and fear, however, were not the terms used to describe the popular sentiments in El Salvador: "Everyone we talked to," - which, incidently, did not include AIFLD's former friends in the UPD - "believed that the human rights situation had greatly improved," and death squad killings had, said the report, been "greatly reduced". As for the bombing of civilians, these allegations had been "hotly contested" by the U.S. Embassy. [13] The report said nothing of the rash of strikes that had occurred in El Salvador both before and during their trip, nor did it comment on the raid on the Social Security hospitals which had taken place just hours after the delegation arrived. (See Chapter Five) [14]

A second delegation composed of middle-level union officials and several vice presidents travelled to Central America in August. In Nicaragua, the trip coincided with the arrest of a CUS official and a demonstration of 1,000 farm workers protesting his detention. [15] Their report referred to the "horrendous conditions..in particular the torture techniques" in El Chipote prison where unionists "were forced

to take hypnotic drugs to induce confessions." The delegates never actually visited the prison, but the Managua-based Permanent Commission on Human Rights had informed them that this was indeed the case. The Commission, they omitted to note, had received U.S. Government funds through NED and PRODEMCA.

In El Salvador the delegates held a reception for President Duarte at the offices of AIFLD. The Institute reported that the situation in El Salvador was still a source of optimism, and yet the left union federation FENASTRAS alone reported 10 assassinations or disappearances of FENASTRAS officials in the first half of 1985. [16] AIFLD also ignored the 30-day UPD ultimatum to the AFL-CIO calling for an inquiry into AIFLD's Salvadoran operation. UPD leader Mendoza wrote to Lane Kirkland in June saying that "AIFLD's work is rapidly deteriorating in a process of corruption, manipulation, and false representation." He demanded that AIFLD leave El Salvador. [17]

A more serious setback for AIFLD occurred when the "social Christian" Confederation of Salvadoran Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Salvadorena -CTS), representing mainly public sector workers, withdrew its support for Duarte over the non-implementation of the Social Pact. The CTS commented that this decision was taken in part to escape the "long tentacles of the AFL-CIO, the Institute, and the U.S. Embassy." [18]

One month before the AFL-CIO's convention another AIFLD delegation followed the now well-beaten track to Nicaragua and El Salvador. The report fell into the familiar pro-Duarte, anti-Sandinista pattern. There was no reference to Duarte's Decree 162 that had been sent before the National Assembly, one that was widely interpreted to be an attempt to render impotent the union leadership in the public sector. [19] A fourth visit came immediately after the AFL-CIO convention. Seven of the 13 delegates were from the SEIU. [20]

Countdown to the Convention.

The sequence of AIFLD-sponsored tours to Central America occurred during a period of considerable anti-intervention activity in the wake of the second NLC report. The NLC's latest recruit was CWA President Morton Bahr. Sheinkman wrote to Bahr in September 1985, "We have seen our ranks grow over the years as the crisis over Central America has deepened. Despite the Reagan Administration's rhetorical and military escalation in that part of the hemisphere, a significant number of labor leaders and members have continued to call for sanity and restraint." [21] Bahr's decision was particularly encouraging for anti-intervention trade unionists: the CWA, the world's largest telecommunications union, had been stronghold of Cold War unionism. In the 1950s the international activities of then CWA president Joseph Bierne paved the way for the creation of AIFLD (see Chapter One).

Bahr's predecessor, Glenn Watts, had served as Secretary-Treasurer of AIFLD and in 1983 played a visible role in the AFL-CIO's campaign against left Salvadoran unionists touring the U.S. Bahr's decision to join the NLC perhaps suggested a certain change in direction for the 650,000 member union.

During this period the NLC's coordinator, David Dyson, was joined by ACTWU organiser Daniel Cantor to develop NLC activities. In the process of integrating Bahr, Dyson and Cantor articulated the NLC's differences with the AFL-CIO's DIA. The NLC's post-tour reports had addressed U.S. policy, but had avoided direct criticism of official AFL-CIO positions. The expression of the NLC's differences with the DIA was for Bahr's benefit and was not a public criticism of official Federation foreign policy. Nevertheless the statement confirmed the differences that existed among union leaders regarding the crisis in Central America. The fundamental difference, wrote Cantor and Dyson, was "one of world-view...While both sides in this debate share a commitment to the development of free trade unionism, the (NL)Committee has rejected a Cold War interpretation of the crisis in Central America." [22]

Specific disagreements with AIFLD were also outlined. AIFLD and the DIA saw the FMLN as the main source of terror in El Salvador; the NLC felt that the indiscriminate bombing of civilians was a far greater problem. While AIFLD-DIA saw Duarte making strides towards re-establishing a functioning judicial system, the NLC considered Duarte to be incapable of

enforcing the law. AIFLD and the DIA shunned the left unions, accusing them as supporters of the FMLN. "In the (NL)Committee's view," the statement continued, "it is not accurate to simply portray these unions as guerilla supporters without describing which part of the guerilla program they favor, such as land reform, dialogue, wage raises, etc." [23] Most importantly, the NLC opposed AIFLD because it "supports the Administration's policies in El Salvador (and) like the Administration AIFLD appears to support a military solution over a political settlement." [24] The NLC rejected such a solution. In respect to Nicaragua, the NLC saw the Sandinistas as a political force independent of any foreign government and considered itself much closer to the ICFTU's position on the question of contra aid. Whereas AIFLD supported the political opposition allied to the contras, and never discussed the devastating impact of the contra incursions, the ICFTU had called for an end to all forms of aggression against Nicaragua. [25]

As Bahr was being brought into the NLC, anti-intervention work continued. The Labor Network on the West Coast sent a tour to Nicaragua in late June. CUS leader Alvin Guthrie wrote to Lane Kirkland expressing dismay that "visiting groups of north American trade unionists, often working in cooperation with Nicaraguan government agencies or government supported unions, try to extract statements from us that support their own slanted version of Nicaraguan reality." [26] Guthrie was probably referring to

anti-intervention unionists who had pressed the CUS over its position regarding the contras, which seemed to vary depending on whether the audience was in Washington or Managua.

Meanwhile trade unionists reporting back from Nicaragua prompted the Seattle City Council to vote unanimously to establish a sister-city relationship with Managua. [27] Also in June a delegation of 27 teachers and other U.S. unionists attended the 19th national convention of the Salvadoran teachers union ANDES.

Two more local committees, in Western Massachusetts and New Jersey, were created in 1985. In the Spring the East Coast committees in New York, Washington, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Boston, West Massachusetts, etc, began meetings known as "regionals" where representatives of the individual committees would meet in a rotating host city every three months to plan events and discuss the changing situation both in the U.S. and in Central America. The Washington committee circulated a speech by AFGE leader Ken Blaylock made during a meeting with them in late February shortly after the conclusion of the NLC tour. Before his trip to Central America with the NLC, Blaylock had been unsure regarding which side of the conflict he supported. "Union leaders in El Salvador," said Blaylock, "sleep in different places each night trying to avoid getting killed...I talked to people in refugee camps; they told me stories that would tear your heart out." On Nicaragua, Blaylock addressed the question of the ban on strikes, noting that in the U.S. Federal workers (many

of them AFGE members) were legally prohibited from taking an active part in political campaigns. Furthermore, their unions were prevented by law from bargaining over wages or benefits or from conducting strike action. "Until our government subscribes to the principles of free trade unionism, collective bargaining, and political rights for its own employees," said Blaylock, "it will never enforce those rights for the rest of the workers in this country and around the world." [28]

Attitudes Towards The Broader Union Membership.

In the war of words over Central America the anti-interventionists were still disadvantaged. The widely-circulated AFL-CIO News and the AIFLD Report (estimated readership 2-3,000 [29]) were not only loyal to the Cold War position, their coverage of Central America gave little indication of the organisational and argumentational challenges of the anti-interventionists. The first edition of the four-page bi-monthly Labor Report on Central America partially redressed this imbalance. Established by the Labor Network on the West Coast, the Labor Report propagated a clear "solidarity" position, that is, unequivocal support for the Sandinistas and the FMLN. The Oakland-based bi-monthly publication would attempt, inter alia, "to build long lasting support for the workers' movements in Central America" and to provide regular information and analysis to the "proliferation

of labor committees, caucuses, and political action committees" which had been formed since 1980 to promote anti-intervention and solidarity work in the unions. The political difference between the editorial line of Labor Report and the NLC was stated, but not stressed. The NLC's "less than enthusiastic" approach to the Sandinistas was considered unfortunate, but the NLC members, said the editors, deserved applause for their principled stand. [30]

The posture of both the Cold War and anti-intervention forces towards the broader membership was intriguing. The anti-interventionists contributed articles to the papers and newsheets of their union locals and engaged in other forms of education and agitation. Many, however, believed that the issue of Central America should be promoted cautiously. True, the structural relationship of the U.S. worker to the world economy was now weaker; true, Reagan had marginalised the unions and encouraged employers to exert greater control in the workplace; true, Vietnam had led to a shift in consciousness which facilitated broader acceptance of anti-intervention arguments: but, from Kirkland to the shop-floor, conservatism and anti-communism were perceived to be persistent and prevalent obstacles to anti-intervention work.

This was considered especially true of the white and still relatively affluent sectors of the working class. The Labor Network activists behind the Labor Report were formally aware of the need for anti-interventionism to penetrate the

rank and file in order to develop what they described as a genuine internationalist current in the unions. However, as a Network activist expressed it, "the leadership of the AFL-CIO has a considerable base of support within labor for its international policies. Support among U.S. workers for the invasion of Grenada, for 'Buy American' appeals, and for the notion that immigrant and minority workers are stealing American jobs indicates that many U.S. workers are more concerned with protection the American way of life than expressing international solidarity." [31] And yet, anti-interventionists had consistently posited that the economic and political changes of the Reagan period meant that preserving the "American way of life" actually required international solidarity as a means of defending jobs and living standards against the predatory incursions of the multinationals. Many anti-interventionists, it seemed, still believed that the relatively high living standards of a broad segment of the U.S. working class was attributable to the exploitation of workers in the third world. The theoretical premise which underscored the Labor Network's appraisal, that is, Lenin's understanding of an aristocracy of labour kept in a position of relative privilege due to the extraction of superprofits from the colonial countries by the forces of imperialism (- a view reinforced by Dependency Theory -) had caused the Labor Network and other anti-interventionists to regard internationalism as morally and politically necessary rather than something which was materially advantageous to the

more privileged U.S. workers.

Another discussion on anti-intervention work among the broader membership appeared in the widely read (among more left-wing union activists) publication Labor Notes in May 1985. The writers suggested that the main difficulty was not the lack of anti-intervention sentiment but the perception that Central America was not a union issue. The most fruitful means of approaching the membership, they reported, had been on the basis of "other identities" - churchgoer, taxpayer, person of colour, person of conscience - rather than relying on appeals to trade union sympathies. [32] Elsewhere another observer wrote that local union leaders who endorsed anti-intervention events were often unprepared to defend their stance before the membership. Union opposition to intervention was therefore not as broad or as deeply rooted as the number of official endorsements appeared to suggest. Furthermore, the "best educated, mostly white, sectors of the service unions" were responding to the anti-intervention movement, but little support was coming from the construction ("hard-hat") unions, the Teamsters, or even from the unions with a high proportion of third world immigrants in their ranks, "such as those in transportation and other segments of the service sector unions." [33]

In December 1984 the West Coast group Trade Unions in Support of El Salvador (TUSES) expressed similar concerns. Anti-intervention work had been inhibited by the fact that "The labor movement has a long tradition of racism, sexism,

and homophobia," an assertion purportedly evidenced by the AFL-CIO's endorsement of Walter Mondale over Jesse Jackson for the U.S. Presidential contest of 1984. [34]

It was somewhat ironic that AIFLD and the DIA, despite their official status and resources, seemed equally cautious in their approach to the rank and file. The caravan of carefully selected delegations to Central America had adequately conveyed AIFLD and the DIA's anxiety that their interpretation of events in Central America might be challenged, at least within the union bureaucracies. And yet, no attempt had been made to utilise their open access to the union movement's propaganda apparatus by appealing over the heads of the dissident leaders on the NLC to the purportedly racist, sexist, and homophobic rank and file. In the age of wage concessions, legal and political setbacks on union, and management reportedly reclaiming shop-floor control from organised labour, it was perhaps feared that shop stewards and activists might question why so much organisational and political energy, as well as financial resources, was being expended on Central America. Was the U.S. not itself scarred by idle plant and machinery and the disrupted lives of many thousands of union men and women affected by the recession of 1980-81? And - perhaps the most difficult question of all - why did Kirkland and other union leaders continue to support the foreign policy of such an anti-union President? In not appealing directly and confidently to the rank and file for support, it was almost as if AIFLD, the DIA and the officials

who supported their position were more aware of the effect anti-intervention arguments might have on the union membership than were the anti-interventionists themselves.

Trade Unions and the Central America/Anti-Intervention Movement.

Meanwhile, the broader Central America/Anti-Intervention Movement (CA/AIM) continued to attract some trade union support for its activities. The idea of a working coalition of anti-intervention forces had been raised on numerous occasions as a way of linking the activities of the wide array of anti-intervention groups. Clearly, if every single group organised its own march in Washington or San Francisco the result would be close to a fiasco. One anti-intervention group, the Emergency National Council (ENC) met in Cleveland, Ohio, in September 1984. Some 500 attended, many of them union activists. The leader of the ENC, Jerry Gordon, was a veteran anti-war organiser in the 1960s who was now a full-time official in the UFCW. Gordon and the ENC had worked to keep alive the traditions of mass mobilisation and agitation established during that period. Anti-war efforts had attracted the support and participation of trade unionists, but, as Gordon himself recorded, "with rare exceptions, they would not attempt to get anti-war resolutions passed at membership meetings or at official union bodies. Nor would they try to mobilize their membership to participate

in anti-war marches." [35]

Some alleged that the ENC was maintaining another, less fruitful, tradition of the 1960s. It was accused of pursuing its own "sectarian" agenda without regard for the broader CA/AIM. The September gathering of the ENC went ahead despite protests from other leading anti-intervention groups such as CISPES and the Rainbow Coalition, which had been built around Jesse Jackson's 1984 campaign. These bodies argued that the ENC's call for a major demonstration against intervention in Central America had occurred without due consultation with all segments of the CA/AIM. No single group, they argued, should claim organisational control or hegemony over the CA/AIM in pursuit of its own agenda. [36] Once convened, the ENC gathering focused on the need for the CA/AIM to reach the mainstream of U.S. political life. The struggle in the trade unions over Central America was viewed as pivotal to this objective. Said one commentator, "The Cleveland group (ENC)...wants to base the coalition in the labor movement and the mainstream churches. They want to bring the peace and solidarity groups into the coalition in a subordinate position." [37]

At this point there appeared to be two coalitions taking shape. One was based around Gordon and shared the view that the labour movement had a particular importance in the struggle against U.S. intervention. The other, based in Washington, appeared to grow from a loose alliance between CISPES and the Rainbow Coalition. This coalition apparently

saw no special role for the unions; union activists were invited to participate, but they were not encouraged to see themselves or their organisations as especially important. With this issue unresolved, a functional unity was eventually forged around plans to conduct a "Spring Mobilization" on April 20, 1985. Moreover, it would be a multi-issue demonstration, for "Peace, Jobs, and Justice" - and not exclusively Central America or anti-interventionist. As many as 1000 organisations - trade union, religious, senior citizens, native American, womens' groups, etc.- reportedly endorsed the demonstrations in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. [38]

The April 20 Moblization attracted an estimated 55,000 demonstrators. Al Lannon, president of ILWU Local 6, representing San Francisco's longshoremen, said that the attendance confirmed that the labour movement should build alliances with the rest of the "progressive community" in order to rejuvenate itself. [39] For Gordon the success of the Mobilization reaffirmed both the historical role and future potential of mass demonstrations: "The labor movement," he told the San Francisco crowd, "was built in this country because of its ability to mobilize the masses into action." [40] Other observers, however, claimed union participation in the event, while significant in San Francisco, was only peripheral in Washington. Many felt this was inevitable as long as the NLC chose not to call a major mobilization of its own. [41] The issue of the role of the trade union leaders

in the broader CA/AIM became more acute in the period that lay ahead. It was becoming increasingly clear that, in order to bring the CA/AIM into the political mainstream, union and church leaders had to be more assertive. Two years would elapse before this actually occurred.

Tours and Protests: The Road to Anaheim.

In the unions most anti-intervention work continued to involve, in one way or another, trade unionists from Central America. A number of struggles against deportation as well as campaigns for political asylum for Salvadoran union activists were conducted by U.S. trade unionists. In particular, Marta Alicia Rivera, an exiled leader of the Salvadoran teachers union ANDES who narrowly escaped being murdered by the death squads, applied for asylum. Rivera, a familiar figure at anti-intervention events, won the support of several AFT and NEA locals and IAM Local 1111 which represented 1,500 airline employees. The campaign reached a successful conclusion in March 1985. [42] Earlier, in February, Alejandro Gomez, a former official in the Salvadoran University Workers Union (Sindicatos de Trabajadores Universitarios -STUS) won the support of Rochester, N.Y., AFL-CIO in his fight against deportation. Gomez had been jailed in Mariona for six months during 1973. In June, the Los Angeles city committee announced the formation of a panel of exiled Salvadoran trade unionists. [43] A similar group, the

Labor Committee for Salvadoran Unionists in Exile, was established in Chicago and immediately organised a delegation to El Salvador. The Committee announced that the delegation had been organised following a request by "several Salvadoran labor union federations (who were) pleading with the labor movement to come to their aid as quickly as possible." [44]

Central American unionists continued to perform political work in the U.S. In the Spring, a Central America Teachers Tour was sponsored by AFGE Local 12 in Washington, D.C.; the two delegates were from the Nicaraguan teachers federation, ANDEN, and the Honduran teachers federation COLPROSUMAH. Irving Brown denounced the tour, as did Donald Slaiman, the Deputy Director of the AFL-CIO's Organization and Field Services. In a statement to Principal Officers of State and Local Central Bodies of the AFL-CIO, the two officials complained, "The group which has been seeking support before labor audiences throughout the country does not represent any of the AFL-CIO supported unions in Central America." [45] Albert Shanker informed all regional AFT officials that the two unionists were being sponsored by the Federation of Central American Teachers (Federacion de Obreros Magisteriales de Centroamerica -FOMCA) which he claimed was being "run out of Nicaragua and is controlled by the Sandinista teachers group, ANDEN, and, to a great extent, by a group called ANDES...of El Salvador." Both groups were controlled, said Shanker, "at the top levels by Marxist-Leninist leaders who maintain a close working relationship with Cuba and the Soviet

Union." FOMCA, said Shanker, was not a legitimate teachers organisation: "a close look at its international work shows that it is primarily concerned with support for the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and the Salvadoran guerilla movement and is discrediting U.S. foreign policy in the region." [46]

During the Summer the city committees on the East Coast began preparations for a tour of representatives from the Salvadoran teachers union ANDES, the left federation FENASTRAS, the Nicaraguan public employees union UNE, the Sandinista Workers'Central CST, and left unionists from Guatamala and Honduras. The committees had worked together for the teachers tour but this was politically and logistically a more adventurous undertaking. The goals of the tour were articulated by the Boston Central America Solidarity Association's Labor Committee; union-to-union ties had to be strengthened, reinforced by material aid. "This tour", said the Boston group, referring no doubt to the participation of the Sandinista unions, "will act as a strengthening factor for the solidarity forces at the core of the (anti-intervention) movement." [47]

As the campaign to acquire union endorsements for the tour gathered momentum the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued a DIA-prepared statement on August 14th which called on "all American trade unionists to shun contacts with the World Federation of Trade Unions and its affiliates...The WFTU and its front groups are engaged in a propaganda war on the international activities of the AFL-CIO, while simultaneously

seeking to encourage American trade unionists to participate in meetings and exchanges with WFTU affiliated unions." [48] The EC appeared to be saying that the forthcoming East Coast tour was a project promoted by the WFTU, implying that U.S. unionists organising such events were little more than WFTU agents in a propaganda war against the AFL-CIO. Such language was reminiscent of the Kissinger Commission: the movement in Central America was not indigenous, it was created by the forces of Soviet imperialism. Similarly, the internal challenge to Cold War unionism emerged not from domestic political and economic realities but from the Prague offices of the WFTU.

Two weeks later a letter from Kirkland to State and Local Central Bodies attacked the proposed tour. The participants, wrote Kirkland, "usually represent organisations that are associated with the WFTU based in Prague, Czechoslovakia, or that openly support the Marxist-Leninist guerilla movements in Central America." Kirkland was especially concerned about the Nicaraguan CST. Not just a WFTU affiliate, the CST, "instead of serving workers' interests (it) functions as an arm of the Nicaraguan government." FENASTRAS, too, was described as having "observer status at the WFTU" and ANDES part of an international teachers organisation controlled by the Soviet Union. Both FENASTRAS and ANDES were accused of supporting the FMLN. If organisations wished to discuss the international struggle for trade union freedom, Kirkland

added, then they should contact the AFL-CIO or AIFLD. [49]

Following the EC statement and Kirkland's attack a handful of AFL-CIO state and local bodies withdrew their endorsements but the bulk of the existing endorsers stood firm. By September 3, six national presidents had endorsed the tour. These were Blaylock of AFGE, Butsavage of the International Molders and Allied Workers Union (IMAWU), Johnson of the Woodworkers (IWA), Nicholas of the hotel and restaurant workers (HERE), Scarbrough of the furniture workers (UFWA) and Winpisinger, leader of the Machinists (IAM). James Kane, president of the non-AFL-CIO UE would later add his name to the list, as did more than fifty union locals and local presidents. [50]

On September 9, FENASTRAS responded to Kirkland's allegation that the federation was linked to the WFTU. It announced, "We maintain fraternal relations with three international bodies (ICFTU, WFTU and the social Christian WCL) but have no formal relations with any. Nevertheless, we have observer status with the ICFTU." [51] Indeed, Hector Recinos, the exiled FENASTRAS official and one of the Salvadoran electrical workers released from prison in early 1984 - the so-called STECEL eleven (see Chapter Four) - had toured Europe and met with ICFTU leaders. Moreover, the ICFTU had invited FENASTRAS to send delegates to its 1983 convention in Oslo. [53] Kirkland had inferred that ANDES, UNE, and the Honduran federation FUTH, had been associated with the WFTU; in reality only the CST was formally affiliated to the

Prague-based organisation.

The tour itself began on October 15 and covered New England, New York City, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Baltimore before concluding on November 16. The themes of the tour closely resembled that of the West Coast tour of 1983: Reagan's anti-union agenda, runaway shops and U.S. corporations use of cheap labour in Central America, and the advances made by workers in Nicaragua. The tour reportedly reached over 8,000 union members, and its organisers considered it to have been a resounding success. However, controversy surrounding the tour continued. Local 201 of the IUE, representing almost 10,000 arms-industry workers on Boston's north shore, invited Francisco Acosta of FENASTRAS and Irene Zuniga, the 23-year old representative of the Nicaraguan public employees union (UNE) to speak at the Local's union hall on October 15. The October edition of the unofficial broadsheet covering Local 201 affairs ("The Union Activist") reported the story under the headline "Marxist Revolutionaries Lecture 201's Membership" [53] The broadsheet claimed that the speakers supported the Salvadoran guerillas and that one of them was actually affiliated to a group "which endorsed the murder of U.S. Marines in San Salvador a few months ago" - a reference to the guerilla assassination of four U.S. marines guarding the U.S. Embassy in early 1985. The broadsheet also asked, "What the hell is our local doing getting involved in international politics when our grievance and seniority systems are crumbling around our collective

ears, not to mention a hundred other shop problems?" [54] One angry local official wrote to the official paper of Local 201, Electrical Union News: "I am totally opposed to utilizing the union's time and money for this purpose...There is not a single union official who was elected based on their positions on world affairs. It's time for Local 201 to concentrate on the business for which the membership is paying." [55] However, the paper's editors recorded that "The union speakers were well received at the meeting, and 201 members were glad to have the chance to hear and judge and talk for themselves." [56] Weeks after the Central American unionists had left the country, Local 201 was still debating the issue. The unofficial paper, in January 1986, accused FENASTRAS of being implicated in the murder of the U.S. Marines. [57]

FENASTRAS's purported support for the FMLN made Acosta the target of a further attack, this time from AIFLD staff member, David Jessup. Jessup and Acosta confronted each other during a current affairs television program staged by Channel 32 in Washington, D.C. Also on the program was Michael Urquhart, a leading figure on the Washington Area Labor Committee. The subject of the November 14 discussion was the AFL-CIO's opposition to the East Coast tour. Jessup accused FENASTRAS of referring to the FMLN-FDR as its vanguard. Acosta responded, "We do not endorse the FMLN; we endorse the peace. We have no guns in our hands, and that is why the death squads are killing us." [58]

Later, Urquhart himself clashed with Irving Brown. Following Kirkland's condemnation of the tour, Urquhart complained to Brown that unionists in the U.S. should have the opportunity to hear the full range of views espoused by the Central American labour movement, regardless of international affiliation. [59] Brown replied by saying that Urquhart's position was a clear betrayal of solidarity. For the AFL-CIO to have sponsored a U.S. tour of the WFTU-affiliated unions in Poland, wrote Brown, would have undermined "the brave workers of Solidarnosc. Similarly, the democratic union movement in Nicaragua would have been undermined had the AFL-CIO hosted a visit by the Somoza-controlled company union(s)...even if this might have permitted that confederation (CGT) to present Somoza's position to US workers." Brown concluded, "It is difficult for me to understand how any U.S. trade unionist could support the organizations on your tour." [60] The Washington Committee, replied Urquhart, believed that "international solidarity extends to all unions that are struggling for survival against repression from the companies, governments, and paramilitary death squads." Defending the Nicaraguan CST, Urquhart argued that its support for the "democratically elected government party (FSLN) does not make it less of a trade union, nor does the British unions' support for the Labour Party make them any less legitimate." [61]

AIFLD and the DIA's reaction to the East Coast tour went beyond written protests. They responded by organising a

touring contingent of their own. The tour, described by anti-interventionists as "the AIFLD Roadshow", began in New York City on September 13, and travelled through Philadelphia, Boston, Providence, Milwaukee, Chicago, Portland, and other cities. [62] Just prior to the start of the tour the AFL-CIO's Organization and Field Services division distributed a model resolution - a reaction to the anti-interventionist resolution passed by the Oregon State AFL-CIO convention in August - that endorsed the Kissinger Report, denounced the Sandinistas and recommended continuing economic and military aid to the Duarte government. Furthermore, it called on the AFL-CIO to "launch an international appeal urging the Nicaraguan government to open a dialogue with the democratic opposition to end the war and implement a system of democratic pluralism." AFL-CIO regional directors were asked to inform Federation headquarters of any attempts to move resolutions on Central America at state or local conventions. [63]

Both Brown and Doherty were central figures in the AIFLD-DIA tour, accompanied by Jose Espinoza of the Nicaraguan CUS, Cristobal Aleman, a representative of the Salvadoran CDT, and a Honduran union leader. At the New York event 100 people heard SEIU leader John Sweeney speak from the platform, which indicated that some NLC members were vulnerable to official pressure. [64] In Philadelphia, a reportedly smaller meeting was punctuated by heated exchanges between the tour organisers and anti-interventionists in the audience. In Detroit the speakers met further audience opposition, and during the

meeting a disagreement became apparent between Brown and Doherty over the AFL-CIO's position on contra aid. Doherty claimed the Federation had no position, but would adopt one at the convention. Brown, rhetorically closer to the CUS, emphasised that the Federation did have a position: opposition to aid to the contras, but supportive of Sandinista-contra dialogue. [65]

Meanwhile Central America was an issue which prompted intense debate at several state AFL-CIO conventions held prior to the national AFL-CIO convention. Oregon had already declared itself to be against intervention. At the Minnesota state AFL-CIO convention Thomas Donahue, Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, arrived at St.Paul to present the model resolution to the 700 delegates. The resolution, despite being recommended for acceptance by the resolutions committee, was decisively defeated. [66]

The vote was tighter at the state conventions in Massachusetts, where a compromise resolution was passed, and Connecticut, where an anti-intervention resolution squeezed through. [67] Following the Maine convention, the Bangor Daily News reported, "Most of the resolutions were accepted with little or no debate by the delegates. It was the Central America resolution that caused some shouting." Delegate John Hanson accused the AFL-CIO of being an accomplice of the U.S. Government abroad. "We cannot stand idly by," said Hanson, "while these actions in Central America are done by the Reagan Administration in our name." Prophetically, Hanson stressed:

"This capricious foray into Central America is being conducted in defiance of the U.S. Congress...It was not too many years ago that the Marines invaded the Dominican Republic. The Marines paved the way for our own Bass Shoe (a Maine-based footwear company) to be located in the Dominican Republic at the expense of my union brothers in this state." The resolution, which passed comfortably, called for an end to both military aid to El Salvador and military attacks against Nicaragua. [68]

On the eve of the full Convention in Anaheim, the "AIFLD Roadshow" concluded its itinerary with a day-long DIA seminar. As the final preparations for the Convention were being made, every effort was made to stave off the expected anti-interventionist challenge. Delegates were reportedly encouraged to meet with AIFLD's Central American guests in private sessions. This bonding exercise was expected to pull the waverers back into the Cold War fold. [69]

Just days before the Convention, the mass-circulation Business Week asked "Is Big Labor Playing Global Vigilante?" It reported that the AFL-CIO was scheduled to spend $43 million in 1985 in international operations covering 83 countries "for anti-communist projects that tend to merge with the Administration's foreign policy themes." More than 90% of the funding, noted the article, came from the U.S. Government. Business Week focused particular attention on the UPD split in El Salvador and the emergence of the NLC. It bluntly described how, "AFL-CIO officials, through a private

group called PRODEMCA, are sponsoring tours of the U.S. by contra leaders who are fighting - with Reagan's help - to overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government." [70]

Just one month earlier another mass-circulation magazine, Readers Digest, provided a glowing account of AIFLD's activities. Known for its conservative stance on most issues, the RD described how William Doherty "wangled his way into Grenada" during the 1983 invasion "before the shooting had stopped" and contacted unions who had "fought Grenada's Marxist dictators with Doherty's support." Moreover, AIFLD was "in the vanguard of the struggle against the Marxist-Leninist government of Nicaragua." [71] The article certainly impressed New York Congressmen Jack Kemp. Kemp, who would run for the Republican presidential nomination as a "Reaganomics" conservative in the 1988 primaries, entered the article into the Congressional Record on September 12. Kemp described the entry as "a salute to the freedom fighters of AIFLD" and Doherty himself was hailed as a "remarkable American." [72]

The Convention Debate.

For the first two days of the Anaheim Convention backroom bargaining over the Executive Council's Central America resolution appeared to produce a compromise between the NLC, Kirkland, and the DIA. Reports described how Kirkland, after intense discussions, agreed to slightly alter

the wording of the resolution, and the NLC accepted the change. [73] Both Nicaragua and El Salvador would now be subject to a call for a negotiated, rather than military, settlement to their respective conflicts. The original resolution had restricted this to El Salvador -leaving the door open for the AFL-CIO to support contra aid. [74] Representatives from AFSCME, the UAW, and other unions sought an unambiguous condemnation of Reagan's support for the contras while the DIA and other leading AFL-CIO officials wanted greater condemnation of the Sandinistas with no specific reference to the contra war. [75] As it stood, the amended resolution seemed to allow space for individual unions or union leaders to pursue their own policy. Everything depended on how the role of the contras was interpreted. If their military campaigns were perceived to be the best available means of forcing the Sandinistas into a political settlement, then contra aid could be supported. If contra aid was seen as a direct military escalation which might harm the prospects for such a settlement, then it should be opposed. [76] Either way, an open confrontation on the convention floor seemed to have been averted.

The confrontation, however, did take place. Furthermore, the debate that unfolded stood in sharp contrast to the kind of discussion which normally transpired at AFL-CIO Conventions. Debates were usually cordial bordering on insipid, and in the area of foreign policy and the Federation's international work little open dissent had

emerged in the 30-year history of such gatherings.

First to the rostrum was Kenneth Blaylock of AFGE; his contribution set the tone for the 90-minute exchange. Blaylock recalled his visit to El Salvador and Nicaragua in highly personal and emotional language:

> As I sat in the church (in El Salvador) late one night and listened to mothers..tell about the atrocities being perpetrated against them and their families by this ("sanitization") technique of military operation, it would literally bring tears to your eyes. When we travel through those areas and we see not just homes destroyed where people maybe did support the rebel forces, but square miles and miles and miles of homes and farms destroyed, it makes you wonder what our government is all about.
>
> In Nicaragua I totally support the resolution in its statement against anti-human rights, anti-labor rights, the suppression of the press. We are dead on target. But..we fail to mention the contras who are perpetuating not a war against military targets in Nicaragua, but a war of terror against the people of that country...
>
> As I visited the (Nicaraguan) coffee plantations and the farms up close to the Honduran border, we talked with Miskito indians, we talked with campesinos who do not fear the Sandinistas. They are carrying weapons from sticks to rifles to protect themselves against the contra. Then I have a young farmer tell me about an attack on his farm where his wife was raped and then killed, (and) he lost two children, not from the Sandinistas, but from the contra..
> Now..when I look at Iran, I look at Vietnam, I look at Nicaragua, I look at El Salvador, Guatemala; I would like for one time for my government to be on the side of the people, not on the side of rich dictators living behind high walls...So every fibre of my body that triggers my reflexes and my basic instincts says to me, if Ronald Reagan supports these efforts..we damn well better be against it. [77]

Following Blaylock's rousing introduction was steelworkers' delegate Leon Lynch. Lynch had visited Central

America also, but on an AIFLD-sponsored tour. In Nicaragua Lynch had visited "grave sites of union leaders who were trying to fight for a pluralistic society". The Sandinistas, he argued, had caused the growth of the contras. Delegate Nita Brueggeman from Oregon AFL-CIO then spoke in favour of a more firmly anti-contra resolution. John Joyce, the Bricklayers' leader who had been a signatory to the PRODEMCA newspaper advertisements, referred to the "armed resistance" and the Sandinista policy of controlling trade unions. Later in the debate, Jerry Brown of the hospital workers (NUHHCE) also called for the Convention to take a firm anti-contra position. It was not, said Brown, an East-West issue; "This is a north-south issue, an issue of poverty...Poverty is our enemy as it is the enemy of the Nicaraguan people. It's an issue of exploitation by the same corporations that we fight every day. They're our enemies and the enemies of the Nicaraguan people." Former SAG President Ed Asner followed, describing support for the contras as "unforgivable". Speaking in a personal capacity, Asner expressed deep concern about the state of emergency in Nicaragua. But, asked Asner:

> Where are our voices when our government destroyed the only oil depot in Nicaragua and mined their harbor? Where were our voices of outrage then? And where are our voices raised against the continuing assault against trade unionists and other civilians in El Salvador where 322 teachers have been killed and another 150 disappeared since 1979? Eight have been murdered in 1985 so far...
>
> Where are our voices when the American Institute for Free Labor Development decides that even the pro-Duarte unions they supported only months before are suddenly too liberal, too uncontrollable? How far to the right

> are we willing to travel in the name of democratic trade unions?...The human death toll in El Salvador has been 100 times greater than in Nicaragua.
> And yet our institutional rhetoric offers no reflection of the truth, no reflection of this great contrast (.) (And) I don't want the labor movement used to do the dirty work of President Reagan or our large multinational companies. [78]

Asner was followed by a delegate from Missouri who spoke favorably about AIFLD. Then Albert Shanker spoke. The AFL-CIO, he remarked, had performed "almost the miraculous" in El Salvador. The right had been defeated, there had been democratic elections, and a "revolutionary" - but still insufficient - land reform had been introduced. Shanker feared that the phraseology in the resolution revealed a split in the AFL-CIO and might "send the wrong message to this Sandinista government." Nicaragua was "well on its way..to full dictatorship...It is a nation that has warmed up to the crushing of Solidarity in Poland...and support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan." Shanker's speech illustrated how rapidly the changes in the political situation in Central America became part of the fabric of the struggle in the AFL-CIO. Just prior to the Anaheim Convention on October 15, the Sandinistas had issued a decree which again suspended the right to strike, along with several other restrictive measures. [79] Shanker asked, "I don't know how many people sitting here, if they lived in a country and those rights were suspended, would not decide to become contras in their own country (.)" The AFT leader remarked that the resolution both legitimised support and opposition to the contras. There was

little doubt how it would be interpreted by Shanker. [80]

Ed Cleary, President of New York State AFL-CIO, spoke next. He attacked the East Coast tour organised by the city committees. The visiting unionists were described as "the enemy within" coming into New York "like a trojan horse" attempting to convince workers of their legitimacy. Gordon Flory of Louisiana AFL-CIO, an attender of every Convention since the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955, then spoke. Flory's position was clear: if he lived in Nicaragua, "with the poverty, no freedom of religion, when armed soldiers come in and tell the priest he can't read a homily over the radio, no freedom of assembly" -he would be a contra too. Completing a quintet of speakers in favour of the AIFLD-DIA position was Dan Gustafson of Minnesota AFL-CIO, and a visitor to Central America. In Nicaragua, said Gustafson, "there is no freedom of religion. There is no freedom of speech. There is no freedom of trade unions...The whole thing is one hundred per cent a Marxist state." [81] ACTWU vice-president Ed Clark was the last anti-interventionist to speak, describing the Salvadoran land reform as "nothing but a joke." The labour movement, said Clark, should reflect the wishes of 80% of the U.S. public and call for an end to military aid. Finally, Lane Kirkland took the floor. He referred to "certain misunderstandings" that had penetrated the debate. Insinuations that the AFL-CIO was in league with Reagan and the right wing were, said Kirkland, "beneath contempt...And I believe that those who made (them) would be those who would

react most vigorously if it was pointed out what associations their support for the Sandinista regime would place them with." Furthermore, "When we send our people around the world, expose them to conditions of great danger, I think they deserve your support and not a knife in the back...This resolution will encourage them to continue in that great work."

The resolution was formally adopted by the Convention as a statement of compromise between two distinct and conflicting leadership positions. The anti-interventionists appeared content that backroom bargaining had stressed the need for a political rather than military solution to the Central America conflict and, despite the heated debate, did not attempt to amend the compromise resolution. [82]

The significance of the convention exchange was not lost on the anti-intervention movement. At the same event in 1967, an attack had been made on a delegate who moved a resolution urging the AFL-CIO to take a neutral stand on the Vietnam War. Joseph Curran, a Federation vice-president, characterised the fight against communism in Vietnam as a sequel to the fight waged against communism in the trade unions of the U.S. which led to the expulsion of the CIO left. Commenting on the longshoremen's assistance to the unions in Camranh Bay who supported the U.S.-backed government of President Thieu, Curran said, "We fought communism on the waterfront many, many, years ago. And, fortunately for us, we licked them and drove them off the waterfront in the U.S..(.)" Curran had a

message for the "innocent and non-thinking youngsters" active in the anti-war movement: "you are either anti-communist or, whether you like it or not, you are in bed with the communists." [83] This was perhaps the closest the AFL-CIO convention came to debating the Vietnam war. The 1985 Convention indicated that some of the innocent youngsters of the 1960s had perhaps begun to make their mark on the U.S. trade union movement.

The Washington Area Labor Committee's Labor Link publication wrote, "For the first time in the AFL-CIO's 30-year history, federation foreign policy was openly debated by elected union leaders on the floor of the biannual convention...The debate itself was a strong setback to the Federation's traditional decision-making on foreign policy." [84] The Labor Report praised the stand taken by certain union leaders in the face of Kirkland's pressure, but considered the compromise to be a disappointment. The resolution, claimed the editors, "rehashes the Reagan line" and "mirrors the Reagan Administration's lies about Nicaragua (and) makes no reference whatsoever to the repression of the trade union movement in El Salvador." The Report stated, "The AFL-CIO's resources are just as surely being used to support U.S. intervention today as they were before the convention." [85] Following the convention, the chemical workers' President Frank Martino wrote to Sheinkman. Martino referred to the ACTWU leader's critical role, but, he added, "There remains a lot of work to be done on the issue of Central America. The

resolution compromise permits that work to continue by each International union." [86]

AIFLD's report of the convention reprinted substantial excerpts from the resolution, but chose not to reproduce the "compromise paragraph" around which the whole debate had revolved. The AIFLD Report, distributed in Spanish throughout AFL-CIO affiliates in Latin America, referred to a "lively debate" at the convention but provided no clue as to the precise contours of the respective positions. (The AIFLD Report did find enough space, however, to mention Kirkland's "fiery address...which brought great applause.") [87] The mainstream press reported on the debate. For example, the Los Angeles Times interpreted the exchange as symptomatic of a shift in leadership style. Kirkland was described as less aristocratic and more intellectual than previous Federation leaders, someone who encouraged open discussion. [88]

Central America was the Convention's only contentious issue. This was despite the fact that the labour movement, in economic, political, and legal spheres of activity remained dismally on the defencive. Real gross earnings for wage earners in the U.S. had fallen one-eighth from 1972 until the end of 1984. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded a 22.4% drop in unionisation in the private sector. In the growth industries, such as finance, insurance and real estate, only 2.7% of workers were in unions. In services the figure was 7.2%, and in the wholesale trade, 8.2%. In 1984, for the third consecutive year, unions organised fewer than 100,000

workers in representational elections before the NLRB. [89] For the anti-interventionists Anaheim was a victory. For large sections of the union rank and file, however, perhaps the 90-minute discussion reflected the misplaced priorities of a trade union federation devoid of ideas and energy in the areas that mattered most to them.

Significantly, the majority of the participants in the Central America debate at Anaheim had recently visited the region, either with anti-intervention or AIFLD-sponsored tours. Clearly, this contributed to the intensity of the discussion; the delegates were forced to ponder discomforting images of war and repression from speakers who were themselves noticeably effected by their direct exposure to the situation in El Salvador and Nicaragua. All told, the debate revealed an emotionally charged political polarization of the upper ranks of the labour movement over an issue that would reach higher peaks of controversy as time progressed.

Conclusion.

The history of the U.S. trade unionism, despite the generally consistent official conservatism of the AFL and, later, the AFL-CIO, is one marked by periodic conflict around international issues. Sharp differences existed between the IWW and the AFL, the early CIO and the AFL, and, at various times, within the AFL itself. Each of these conflicts reflected profound ideological differences; the AFL leaders

had explicitly rejected the socialist explanations of the Second International, accepted capitalism, and, in turn, struggled to be accepted by U.S. capital and the state. The socialists in the AFL, the IWW, and many in the early CIO, embraced various currents of socialist thought which shaped their international perspective and policies.

The intensity of these past conflicts helps put the 1985 confrontation into proper perspective. The Convention at Anaheim clearly marked an important moment in the internal challenge to the Cold War policies of the DIA and AIFLD. For the first time since the purge of the CIO, U.S. foreign policy, and with it the international activities of the AFL-CIO, was again a contentious issue. However, despite the relative significance of this development, the ideological parameters of this challenge to official AFL-CIO and U.S. Government international policy remained far less precise than was the case in the past. In other words, the NLC and a large portion of its supporters in the lower ranks of U.S. trade unionism had expressed dissatisfaction with certain aspects of Cold War unionism, but had been unable to offer an alternative internationalism based on clearly defined objectives. The NLC itself had avoided faction status on the AFL-CIO Executive Council and only a few of its members, such as Sheinkman and Blaylock, were clearly identified as opponents both of AFL-CIO and U.S. Government policy in Central America.

The city committees continued to reflect a functional unity between anti-interventionists and those with a solidarity perspective. In the case of the latter, unequivocal support for the FMLN and FSLN reflected their anti-imperialist and formally socialist predilections. However, quite unlike the challenges of the past, the Left in this case was devoid of the mass base of the IWW and the early CIO which developed their following as a result of intense class battles with U.S. capital in the domestic arena. In total contrast, the development of the anti-interventionist challenge in the U.S. trade unions coincided with a period of general inertia in the labour movement. In the absence of serious and sustained trade union resistance to the Reagan agenda, the relatively small contingent of anti-intervention activists had tapped into the accumulated frustration of a whole layer of trade unionists, including certain union leaders, who to some extent appeared to grasp the Central America controversy as a chance to ventilate anger in the direction of the White House.

Of course, the process of forming a new world view or ideology is frequently inaugurated by a negative and confused response to all the seemingly available options. The AFL-CIO was now the scene of a political insurgency which had neither an active mass base or a clear long term objective. As Blaylock expressed it, this was about "basic instincts...if Ronald Reagan supports these efforts...we damn well better be against it." [90]

AIFLD and the DIA's support for liberal intervention in Central America had prcvided the AFL-CIO's Cold War adherents with some "progressive" cover, particularly during the period following the Salvadoran elections of 1982. The Salvadoran land reform was posited as a concrete achievement in the general and gradual process of taming the forces of reaction and supporting moderate democrats, an achievement inspired by the intervention of the AFL-CIO. What was needed, AIFLD and the DIA now argued, was more U.S. Government effort in this direction in order to build a genuine democratic centre. In the case of Nicaragua, the thrust of AIFLD and DIA policy was toward support for the purportedly more democratic elements of the contras, or, as the CIA called them, the Democratic Resistance. The following chapter documents the fate of the AFL-CIO's reform proposals adopted by the Kissinger Commission, and the part played by certain union leaders in the ongoing Congressional battle to secure aid to the contras in 1986.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The eleven officials listed in Chapter Four were joined in February 1984 by Kenneth Blaylock (Pres., AFGE) and James Kane (Pres., U.E.). In December 1984, Henry Nicholas (Pres., NUHHCE) and John Sweeney (Pres. SEIU) brought the number of NLC members to 15. Bernard Butsavage (Pres., International Molders and Allied Workers Union); William Bywater (Pres. IUE), James Herman (Pres., ILWU), Dolores Huerta (Vice-Pres. UFWA), Georgianna Johnson (Pres. Local 1199 [NYC] Drug, Hospital and Health Care Employees Union) Keith Johnson, (Pres. Int'l Woodworkers of America), David Livingston (Pres. Dis. 65 UAW), Gerald McEntree (Pres. AFSCME), Cleveland Robinson (Sec.-Treas Dis. 65, UAW) brought the total to 24.

Since 1983 Robert Goss (OCAW), Ken Brown (GCIU), Willard McGuire (NEA) and Douglas Fraser (UAW) had been replaced on the NLC by their successors, respectively Joseph Misbrener, James Norton, Mary Hatwood Futrell, and Owen Beiber.

2. Interview David Dyson, ACTWU, New York City. Nov. 13, 1986. See National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, Report El Salvador: Labor, Terror, and Peace. (New York: ACTWU, 1985).

3. Labor Report on Central America, No. 1. The Boston Globe recorded, "In February, a delegation of senior AFL-CIO trade unionists were blocked by William Doherty from meeting with his representatives in El Salvador." Julie Preston, "Salvadoran Unions Splinter Despite U.S. Efforts," Boston Globe, August 19, 1985.

4. The Search For Peace in Central America, op. cit. 1985. p.7

5. ibid. p.4.

6. Cited, ibid. p.3.

7. ibid. p.16 & 24.

8. ibid. p.25.

9. ibid. p.25.

10. ibid. p.26

11. Ed Clark, Vice President of ACTWU, quoted in CISPES Alert! June 1985.

12. AIFLD, Trip Report by Western States' Trade Union Delegation to Central America, Fall 1985, p. 12.

13. ibid. p.4

14. Preston, Boston Globe, Aug. 19, op. cit.

15. AIFLD Report, July-Aug. 1985

16. Bulletin, FENASTRAS, Washington D.C. Sept. 10, 1985. The legal advisor of FENASTRAS, Doroteo Gomez Arias, had been captured on August 1 by the National Police. Gomez, the former Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of San Salvador, was found hanged in his cell on August 9 by a judge. On August 3, two members of the Executive Council of a union at a bed and mattress factory were kidnapped, and on August 9 two officers of the poultry workers union and the National Peasants Association (ANC) were abducted.

17. Ramon Mendoza, UPD. TL to Lane Kirkland, President,

AFL-CIO, June 12, 1985.

18. According to CTS leader Miguel Angel Velasquez, Duarte had used the unions as "a trampoline to get into power..Once there they (the government) have forgotten about the workers and campesinos who put them there." See Christopher Norton, "Build and Destroy," NACLA Report on the Americas 9 6 (Nov.- Dec. 1985) p. 36.

19. Said one writer, "This decree (160) was aimed particularly at..the CTS, which had withdrawn from the pro-Duarte coalition (and) was only one of a number of mechanisms to control labor." See K.E. Sharpe, "El Salvador Revisited: Why Duarte is in Trouble," World Policy Journal, Summer 1986, p. 434.

20. AIFLD Report Jan 1986.

21. J. Sheinkman, Pres. ACTWU. TL to Morton Bahr, Pres. CWA, September 5, 1985.

22. Daniel Cantor & David Dyson, Summary of the Differences Between the National Labor Committee and the AIFLD/AFL-CIO Positions on Central America; a Statement to Morton Bahr, President, CWA. ACTWU New York, Undated Typescript.

23. ibid.

24. ibid.

25. ibid.

26. Alvin Guthrie, President CUS. TL to Lane Kirkland, Pres. AFL-CIO, June 4, 1985.

27. John Pitman, "U.S.-Latin America Class Solidarity'" World Marxist Review, 28 10, October 1985.

28. Washington Area Labor Committee newsletter, Labor Link, Spring 1985.

29. Telephone interview Dr. William Douglas, consultant to AIFLD. November 4, 1986.

30. Labor Report on Central America (hereafter LRCA) No. 1.

31. Labor Network on Central America, "The Struggle in the U.S. Labor Movement over Central America," Background Discussion Paper 2, November 1984, p.8

32. David Slaney and Leslie Cohen, "Making U. S. Intervention in Central America a Labor Issue," Labor Notes, May 1985.

33. J. Hess, Untitled article submitted to Against the Current; Typescript, Unpublished.

34. Circulated letter, Trade Unions in Support of El Salvador (TUSES), Oakland, Ca. Dec. 1984.

35. Jerry Gordon, "Cleveland Labor and the Vietnam War," Typescript, draft, 1987, p. 2. Unpublished.

36. Telephone interview, Teresa J. Burns, Jan. 22, 1987, National Office, CISPES, Washington D.C.; Interview Jim Lafferty, New York ENC, February 9, 1987.

37. TUSES letter to "Members and Friends," Dec. 14, 1984. Signed J. Hess.

38. See J. Gordon, "Building Unity in the AIM," Keynote address to Second Emergency National Council Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Minneapolis, June 21, 1985.

39. Lannon, quoted in Socialist Action, Nov. 1985

40. Gordon, op. cit.

41. Interview, Ernesto Jofre, Coordinator, N.Y.C. Labor Committee in Support of Democracy & Human Rights in El Salvador, December 13, 1987, New York.

42. Interview, John D. Mars, Special Asst. for Peace and International Relations, NEA, August 13, 1986, Washington D.C.

43. Interview Katerina Davis, Los Angeles Committee, April 14, 1987.

44. Circulated Letter, Labor Committee for Salvadoran Trade Unionists in Exile, Chicago, September 18, 1985.

45. Irving Brown and Donald Slaiman. TL to Principal Officers of State and Local Central Bodies, AFL-CIO, May 15, 1985.

46. Albert Shanker, President AFT, statement released May 15, 1985.

47. Labor Committee of the Central America Solidarity Association (CASA), Boston, Proposal for an East Coast Tour of Central American Labor, Typescript, Undated.

48. Statement of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, August 14, 1985.

49. Lane Kirkland, TL to Principal Officers of State

and Local Central Bodies, AFL-CIO, August 29, 1985.

50. The list of endorsers appeared in promotional material published by tour organisers.

51. Press statement, FENASTRAS, Washington D.C., Sept. 9, 1985.

52. See J. Lefkowitz, "Organizing Openly: Exile Returns for Salvador union Congress," Guardian (U.S.), Nov. 20, 1985. See also, "Speech by Salvadoran Union Leader," Intercontinental Press (4th. Int'l) Dec. 16 1985.

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57. Union Activist, 1 8.

58. Statements by Francisco Acosta (FENASTRAS) and David Jessup (AIFLD), Channel 32 Television, Wash. D. C. Nov. 14, 1985.

59. Mike Urquhart. TL to Irving Brown, (exact date unknown.)

60. Irving Brown. TL to Urquhart, Dec. 4, 1985.

61. Urquhart, TL to Brown, April 16, 1986.

62. LRCA, Nov.-Dec. 1985 p.2

63. ibid.

64. AIFLD Report, Dec. 1985

65. Jane Slaughter, "`Opponents Uninformed' Kirkland Charges: AFL-CIO Leaders Defend Central America Policy," Labor Notes, Oct. 1985.

66. ibid.

67. Socialist Action, Nov. 1985.

68. Emmet Meara, "AFL-CIO members back resolution to end military aid to El Salvador," Bangor Daily News, Nov. 8, 1985.

69. Interview David Dyson, op. cit. The quality press gave some attention to the pre-convention events. The

Washington Post covered the dissident tour, while the Los Angeles Times focused on the ambiguities of the Brown-Doherty exchange on the contras. See Washington Post, "Latin Unionists Tour Divides AFL-CIO Politically," Nov. 17, 1985 and Harry Bernstein, "Unions Hope to Avoid Debating U.S. Policy," Los Angeles Times, Sept. 25, 1985.

70. Aaron Bernstein, "Is Big Labor Playing Global Vigilante," Business Week, Nov. 4, 1985.

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73. LRCA, Jan-Feb. 1986

74. The new wording now read, "Unfortunately, the Reagan Administration continues to place emphasis on a military rather than a political solution to the conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador. But the AFL-CIO believes that a negotiated settlement, rather than a military victory, holds the best hope for the social, economic, and political justice that the people of Nicaragua deserve."

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77. Transcript of the debate on Res. 34, "Labor, National Security and the World," Adopted by the Sixteenth Biannual Convention of the AFL-CIO, Oct. 28-31, 1985, Anaheim, California. Transcript made available by the AFL-CIO, Washington, D.C.

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83. Seventh Constitutional Convention, AFL-CIO, 1967, Bal Harbor, Florida, Resolution 39, "Support of American Troops in Vietnam," Proceedings, Vol. 1 pp. 270-283.

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CHAPTER 8

AIFLD'S LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT: FROM LIBERAL INTERVENTION TO ARMED COUNTERREVOLUTION.

Chapter Four discussed how in early 1984 the Kissinger Commission issued a report which urged U.S. military aid was necessary to defeat the guerilla insurgencies in Central America and protect the democratic opening achieved by the forces of moderate reformism. [1] Such aid, suggested the Report, should be accompanied by a program of liberal intervention: economic assistance directed at small producers in the private sector, democratic trade unions and rural cooperatives in order to facilitate the economic betterment of a broad section of the working population. Real economic improvements, it claimed, would weaken the influence of the revolutionary left and the dictatorial right and provide a popular base for a vibrant "democratic centre". [2]

The pre-emptive reform or liberal interventionist proposals contained in the Kissinger Report, despite alterations which accorded a pivotal role to the private sector and the free market, came almost entirely from the AFL-CIO's written and verbal contributions to the Commission's proceedings. [3] This chapter examines the fate of the

AIFLD/AFL-CIO's Kissinger proposals, and the role of the National Endowment For Democracy (NED). In addition, this chapter focuses particular attention on the involvement of U.S. trade unions in the Reagan Administration's attempt in 1986 to secure a $100 million military aid package for the contras. This chapter demonstrates that, in the face of Administration inaction regarding the reform proposals, AIFLD did not withdraw its support for Reagan's military agenda. Indeed, AIFLD and other Cold War union leaders actually intensified their pro-contra activities during this period. This chapter also reviews the trade union situation in Nicaragua in 1986 at a time of deepening economic hardship.

The Fate of the AFL-CIO's Reform Proposals

In 1983 AIFLD successfully urged the Kissinger Commission to recommend the formation of a Central America Development Organization (CADO) in order to implement the Commission's reform proposals. The CADO, or so AIFLD anticipated, would be funded by the U.S. Government from the monies earmarked for the implementation of the Commission's economic proposals. By early 1986 two years had elapsed since the AFL-CIO Executive Council's endorsement of the Report. The military dimension of the Report had been promptly implemented; the Salvadoran army, in particular, had been re-equipped and "professionalized" and the FMLN appeared at this time to be militarily contained. Had the Administration

moved with similar urgency to implement the CADO recommendation?

It seemed not. In the Spring of 1985, after more than a year of Administration inaction, Lane Kirkland criticised Reagan for missing "a golden opportunity to embark on an approach that I think could have stirred people's imaginations." [4] In March 1985 William Doherty noted that proposed Administration funding for the implementation of the Report's reform recommendations was one-third less than the sum suggested by the Kissinger Commission. "We have noted that CADO," said Doherty, "to say the very least, does not appear in Administration testimony to occupy a position of prominence in the new proposed foreign aid legislation. The AFL-CIO can only hope that it has not been fully informed, and that the Administration is, indeed, prepared to follow through on their previous commitments to this innovative recommendation." [5]

Congressional authorisation to move ahead with CADO was eventually included in the Foreign Aid Legislation approved in August 1985. However, CADO's inclusion required the passage of an AFL-CIO supported Congressional amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act which committed the President to establish CADO. [6] Before the Defense Strategy Forum in December 1985 Doherty was more optimistic. CADO, he claimed, was "nothing short of revolutionary" and would become a reality "during the second quarter of 1986." [7]

Union representatives from the AFL-CIO and its affiliates in Central America, Panama, and Belize met in Miami in late February, 1986, to discuss the way forward for CADO. The gathering stipulated that "only democratic labor organisations should be eligible for membership of CADO," which effectively barred WFTU affiliates and other undesirables. The union leaders resoloved "to return to their respective countries and enter into serious negotiations with their business and government counterparts." [8] Later, in September, a seminar hosted by the Central American Business Institute (INCAE) in San Jose met to discuss CADO.

Almost three years had by this time elapsed since AIFLD presented CADO to the Kissinger Commission. Little had been accomplished. The principle vehicle designed to implement the reform agenda outlined in the Kissinger Report had still not been constructed. In San Jose Doherty requested a date be finalised for the formal launch of CADO. Before union, business, and government representatives, Doherty reaffirmed his faith in the U.S. Congress: CADO, said Doherty, "embodies democracy and pluralism;" for this reason "it should be obvious..that Congress..is going to pay attention to the recommendations of CADO..[.]" [9]

Meanwhile, the Administration continued to snub the CADO project. Secretary of State George Shultz's August 1986 report on the implementation of the Kissinger proposals discussed CADO in a short final-page appendix. Shultz's choice of words was also revealing. The meetings that had already taken place

between labour, government, and business were, he stated, convened in order "to discuss the desirability of organizing a CADO." Moreover, the United States, suggested the report, "will continue to explore the feasibility of organizing a CADO on a regional basis." (Emphasis added.) Such language strongly indicated that the Reagan Administration was not convinced, or did not wish to be convinced, that CADO should actually be established. [10].

U.S. and Central American government, business, and union representatives met in Tegucigalpa in December, 1986, to draft a statute for the CADO. [11] In March, 1987, Tegucigalpa was again the scene of a broader meeting of representatives from each sector. CADO, it was (again) agreed, should be established. However, there was disagreement over the method of selecting the representatives for the respective sectors. Another meeting would need to be arranged, although the date was not specified. [12]

CADO was, in reality, a clear non-starter. The Reagan Administration had rejected the liberal interventionism of the AFL-CIO. The Kissinger Report had served its purpose; it had been accepted by Congress because it had addressed the economic and social problems of the region as well as the need for military aid to defeat the immediate threat of a Soviet-Cuban backed guerilla insurgency. The military aid was sent and the economic assistance was channeled to the existing rulers of the region, who, according to the Commission, had helped perpetuate and intensify the unrest. CADO had, on

paper, challenged the established modus operandi of U.S. aid distribution to its allies by arguing for direct assistance to non-government organisations such as trade unions. Furthermore, the model of development that CADO envisaged was clearly at odds with the free-market, foreign investment formulas favoured by the Reagan Administration and embodied in the ultimately ineffectual Caribbean Basin Initiative. [13]

Having outlived their usefulness to the Administration, the AFL-CIO's reform proposals were now being quietly ignored. No one except AIFLD and the AFL-CIO appeared to notice. Congress had become as besotted with Duarte as it was enraged by the Sandinistas: no one now was talking about the root social and economic causes of the Central American crisis. Furthermore, AIFLD and the DIA had themselves focused much of their political energy on defaming the Sandinistas and expressing virtually unqualified praise for the Duarte government. The Administration and the AFL-CIO's foreign policy spokespersons therefore agreed not just on politics, but also on priorities. Had AIFLD and the DIA shown commitment to their own reform project by giving CADO priority over their anti-Sandinista, pro-Duarte agenda, at least some Democrats may have been persuaded to shift the debate back to the root causes of the crisis identified by the Commission. This, however, would not have saved CADO. AIFLD had insisted on tripartite structures, operating in several countries simultaneously. This alone posed serious political and organisational problems, even if it was accepted that there

existed a basis for agreement on economic matters between the unions, business and the various governments in Central America.

In August 1987 AIFLD finally acknowledged the truth: "It must be deeply regretted," noted the Institute, "that the Administration's several endorsements of the CADO concept...have proved hollow; indeed the Administration has cut this highly promising idea adrift." [14] In April 1988 Doherty, speaking before a conference on Central America in Denmark sponsored by the Danish national union federation LO, remarked that the prospects for CADO were somewhat gloomy. Doherty's presentation generated a somewhat cool response from the assembled delegates. [15]

The National Endowment For Democracy, 1985-88

The Administration and AIFLD were, however, more united on the need for concerted political intervention. While CADO failed to get off the ground, the AFL-CIO continued to play a major role in the activities of the National Endowment For Democracy (NED), an initiative inspired by President Reagan to export democratic ideas as a means of fighting the ideological war against Marxism-Leninism on a global scale. For AIFLD and the DIA the political and ideological struggle against the revolutionary forces in Central America was, in any case, a pre-requisite to genuine reform. The formation of NED in 1983 consummated the political partnership between

the Administration and the AFL-CIO's international apparatus around the need to develop the political and ideological offensive to bolster the democratic centre in Central America and elsewhere against the forces of left and right (see Chapter Four.)

From its beginnings NED was controversial both in theory and in practice. Congress had been reluctant to give cash to private organisations for political purposes, and thus "privatise" a portion of Government foreign policy and remove it from Congressional scrutiny. The mini-scandal of the AFL-CIO actively taking sides in the Panamanian election of 1984 (supporting the military's candidate, Nicholas Barletta) aroused further Congressional anxiety.

As NED's activities increased, however, so too did AFL-CIO involvement. NED had already channeled $11 million to the AFL-CIO in 1984 for its international work and a further $13.8 million was made available in 1985. NED also funded the pro-contra PRODEMCA in 1985 for the purpose of assisting the anti-Sandinista newspaper La Prensa in Managua. In June 1986 the Sandinista government closed down La Prensa; it eventually cited NED funding as the principal reason for the action. NED also provided $60,000, via the AFL-CIO, to the AIFLD-supported CUS in Nicaragua, a considerable sum given the fact that the CUS's membership, according to most estimates, was only a few thousand members. During this period NED money was also being distributed to favoured labour movement organisations in the Philippines, Fiji, South Africa,

Central Africa, France, Britain, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Israel, Haiti, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Guatamala. [16]

The NED's activities appeared to have only a limited propaganda value for the anti-intervention movement. Ed Asner had attacked the NED from the rostrum at the AFL-CIO convention at Anaheim (See Chapter Seven) and the Labor Report produced an article on NED-AIFLD/PRODEMCA activities in Central America. [17] However, this limited attention aside, the NED marked another institutional manifestation of the active relationship between the international affairs network of the AFL-CIO and U.S. Government agencies and projects, a relationship which extended to the door of the President's office. A White House briefing paper leaked to the press in September 1985 stated that the Department of State and the National Security Council, at that time the sphere of activity of Lt. Col. Oliver North, had "been getting help from organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy and the AFL-CIO" in their pursuit of Administration objectives in Central America. The briefing paper also disclosed that the White House was "prepared to seek additional sources to allow them (NED and the AFL-CIO) to undertake an even greater role." [18] Indeed, right-wing Senator Orrin Hatch, a board member of the NED alongside Kirkland and AFT leader Albert Shanker, openly stated that the AFL-CIO's international work had been more useful and effective than the activities of the CIA. Hatch's office informed the Washington Post that the AFL-CIO "has tremendous leverage for political activity compared to,

say, the CIA covert operations, which often fail." [19]

During 1985 to 1988 NED's total grants exceeded $66 million, of which $24.6 million was channelled to the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI). The principal recipients of the FTUI's portion of NED cash were Solidarnosc in Poland ($3.6 m.); the formerly pro-Marcos Trades Union Congress of the Philippines ($2.7 m.), and the Portuguese social democratic union federation UGT ($1.6 m.). NED money to the CUS or CUS-supported projects in Nicaragua totalled $410,000 in 1985-88, although Central America as a whole received only 3 per cent of FTUI's allowance from NED. [20]

Unions, Congress, and Contra Aid: 1986.

Meanwhile, the period that followed the AFL-CIO's 1985 convention demonstrated that the compromise established between the NLC and the Cold War wing of the Federation leadership, in effect, unsustainable even in the short term. During early 1986 AIFLD and the DIA's pro-contra activity shifted into a higher gear, coinciding with an Administration request for $100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan insurgents. The establishment of PRODEMCA in 1984 provided a vehicle for union leaders to support the contras; by 1986 PRODEMCA was prepared to intervene to support Administration efforts to win Congressional support for the "Nicaraguan Resistance."

Earlier, in November 1985, Congress approved action which converted $27 million in "humanitarian aid" approved the

previous June into a fund for military hardware. The Boland amendment which prohibited CIA assistance to the contras was also repealed in 1985, thus permitting the Agency to provide the contras with information and training. Now the contras needed arms to fight the Sandinistas, and, their opponents believed, to terrorise the Nicaraguan population. [21]

The most important priority for the contra aid campaign remained the transformation of the image of the contras from that of a brutal and ramshackle mercenary army to heroic freedom fighters in the front line of battle against communism. The Department of State's Office for Public Diplomacy (OPD) directed its propaganda to this end, taking its cue from PRODEMCA and the "Gang of Four" Democrats who played such a significant role in the 1985 contra aid campaign. (See Chapter Six) The OPD declared that the issue of free trade unions was an integral part of the democratic (i.e. contra) struggle. On January 22 1986 the contras' political front, the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) came forth with a manifesto entitled "Principles and Objectives For the Provisional Government of National Reconciliation." The document payed homage both to the armed contra forces and to the "civic courage" of trade unions and others in the internal opposition forces. The UNO promised to honour the right to strike, outlined its intention to de-nationalize properties and businesses expropriated by the FSLN, and to act as a guarantor of "private property as the expression of a national right." [22]

OPD propaganda also made efforts to deny the contras had committed atrocities and claimed that the crimes themselves had been perpetrated by the Sandinistas, who then blamed the contras in order to discredit the "democratic resistance." [23] These allegations were tantamount to saying that the Sandinistas had deliberately murdered hundreds, if not thousands, of its own health workers, teachers, and agricultural specialists, as well as several non-Nicaraguans who had spent periods working in the country as an act of support for the revolution. [24] In 1985 alone 70 construction workers had been killed by the contras for their part in building clinics and schoolhouses for the rural population. Between 1981 and 1985 more than 300 leaders of peasant cooperatives had been selectively assassinated in northern Nicaragua. [25] And yet Secretary of State Shultz could only note that "One of the most striking characteristics of Sandinista communism is its messianic impulse to violence." The contras, on the other hand, had merely responded to a "long series of repressive acts", an example of which, said Shultz, had been insults aimed at the Pope. [26]

Spokespersons for AIFLD, principally Doherty, did not offer official support for the President's aid request, but clearly echoed OPD propaganda that was designed to win Congress to the contras. In December 1985 Doherty appeared before the Defense Strategy Forum at the International Club in Washington, D.C., where he referred to "the brutality of the Sandinistas" and described the contras as "freedom

fighters." [27] Shortly afterwards the Washington Times quoted Doherty as saying, "The Sandinista dictatorship is even worse than the Somoza dictatorship (and) there are more..true Sandinistas fighting in the freedom forces than there are in the Sandinista militia." Doherty also called for a worldwide economic and political boycott of Nicaragua. By these means, said Doherty, "the government would fall and you wouldn't have to have any type of outside armed intervention." [28]

During the same period AIFLD official David Jessup circulated an article to trade union leaders and officials written by SDUSA intellectual Joshua Muravchik. An attached note described the article as "one of the best analyses I have seen on the nature of the Sandinistas unique brand of communism." Muravchik called for force to be used against the Nicaraguan regime, either that or the U.S. must get used to the idea of a Communist government not far from its southern border. [29]

The call by the full AFL-CIO convention for a non-military solution to the Central American crisis was at this time being consciously undermined by AIFLD officials. On paper the AFL-CIO's position seemed to support the Contadora peace initiative, although AIFLD had publicly stated that the U.S. should not be restrained by the Contadora treaty (See Chapter Six). Nicaragua had accepted the treaty in September 1984 but the other Central American countries then came forward with amendments and Nicaragua withdrew. [30] The Administration's discomfort with Contadora was by this

time obvious; the Reagan strategy, in the words of one observer, was "to convince observers that it is actually Nicaragua that is blocking peace efforts so that military assistance to the contras is seen as the only way to bring Managua to the bargaining table." [31]

AIFLD's portrayal of the Sandinistas as heinous and untrustworthy was advanced still further by means of the Institute's collaborative relationship with the NED-funded conservative human rights organisation, Freedom House. Freedom House had already echoed OPD propaganda when it accused the Sandinistas of deliberately committing atrocities to discredit the contras; now, in March 1986, Freedom House writer Bruce McColm attacked the Sandinistas in a lengthy article in AIFLD Report. [32] In May McColm called for the U.S. to enact the Rio Treaty of 1947 whereby countries could combine their military capabilities to defeat a threat to peace in the Americas - in other words, the U.S. should launch a Grenada-style invasion of Nicaragua. [33]

The DIA, in late 1985, published a 59-page statement on the situation in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Irving Brown's preface stated that the AFL-CIO's "active role" in both countries had been "subject to considerable misunderstanding, misinformation, and even disinformation." The contras were again depicted as a genuine and indigenous social movement responding to Sandinista repression. The document quoted from an article by Bernard Aronson, one of the so-called "Gang of Four" Democrats, which stated that the contra ranks "include

poor peasants, small farmers, indians, devout Christians, draft resisters, and deserters from the Sandinista army." [34] There was no mention of Somoza's former National Guard, who, even the Department of State acknowledged, constituted 27% of the contra leadership. [35] Ex-contra Edgar Chammorro had declared in September 1985 that the contras were "totally controlled" by ex-Guard personnel who, he said, had "little respect for human rights or the rights of prisoners." The former contra referred to the "systematic killing" of civilians in the rural areas. [36] Later, in 1987, Chammorro described how the OPD "disseminated false stories" about Sandinista persecution of Jews, churchpeople, and other groups. [37]

Amnesty International's 1986 report substantiated the claims made by Chammorro and numerous others that the contras were indeed terrorising the Nicaraguan population. AI referred to "summary execution by irregular forces opposing the Government of Nicaragua..(and)..a pattern of torture and extrajudicial killings." AI also complained that the "Governments of Honduras and the USA..appeared to encourage or expressly condone such abuses." The UNO, said AI, "continued to routinely torture and summarily execute their captives." [38]

While AIFLD and the DIA were putting as much effort as they dared into defaming the Sandinistas and promoting the contras, the NLC came out against the $100 million aid package requested by the Administration. The 23 national union

leaders on the Committee signed a letter to Congress in early March that described the contra package as "counterproductive." [39] The New York Times commented that the PRODEMCA-NLC split revealed an ideological division in the U.S. labour movement which spanned decades. [40] The NLC's statement of opposition to contra aid was supplemented by William Wynn, the non-NLC president of the UFCW. Wynn, representing 1.3 million workers, urged Congress to "save the American people from this morass by voting to end all contra aid." [41] Union efforts to defeat the Administration on contra aid coincided with a wave of lobbying and protest activity throughout the U.S.

Despite these protests the union leaders who favoured contra aid kept the initiative. On March 16 PRODEMCA bought full-page advertisements in the New York Times and the Washington Times that requested tax-deductible contributions to assist the contra cause. Similar advertisements in 1985 had requested support for those in Nicaragua fighting for democracy. PRODEMCA was this time more explicit regarding the true character of their project, and called openly for "military assistance" for the democratic opposition. Union names attached to the full-page advertisments were Doherty, ILGWU President Sol Chaikin, Shanker of the AFT, Drozak of the Seafarers and John Joyce of the Bricklayers. [42]

The anti-intervention movement quickly condemned the statements. Union leaders had given explicit support for a military option in Central America at a time when the

Federation's policy was to support a non-military solution to the conflict. In one case, the opposition went beyond verbal condemnations. Following the first PRODEMCA advertisments in 1985, 427 college faculty and higher education members of the New York State United Teachers (representing AFT members) attempted to insert a paid advertisement of their own in their local union newspaper, the New York Teacher. The advertisement complained that AFT leader Albert Shanker's support for the contras, expressed through PRODEMCA, did not reflect AFL-CIO policy. Edward Bleeker, the paper's editor, refused the advertisement on the grounds that it was a political statement. The 427 filed a federal law suit against the AFT in April, 1986, which charged that Bleeker had violated their rights of expression as individual union members. However, the financial cost of pursuing this course of action to a conclusion was later considered too prohibitive and the suit was withdrawn. [43]

The PRODEMCA advertisments also generated some controversy in Congress. Since its formation in 1984 PRODEMCA had received roughly $400,000 in NED funds. Suspicions were therefore raised that U.S. Government money had been used to pay for PRODEMCA's advertisments, which, in turn, championed an explicitly partisan (i.e., Administration) objective. Even Congressional supporters of contra aid voiced complaints. [44] PRODEMCA denied using NED funds for the advertisments, and cited its receipt of grants from several right-wing bodies such as the Olin Foundation, the Carthage Foundation, and the

Smith-Richardson Foundation. Nevertheless, the human rights group Americas Watch denounced PRODEMCA for "flying under false colors in portraying itself as a citizens organization when it is actually a vehicle for distributing funds to anti-Sandinista organizations." [45]

The PRODEMCA advertisments were designed to appear on the same day, March 16, as the President was scheduled to make a major speech on the Administration's contra aid request. Reagan delivered what was widely considered to be his most vituperative and comprehensive attack on the Sandinistas. In his twenty-minute address, Reagan accused the Sandinistas of plotting to overthrow Mexico; constructing a military deep-water port for the Soviet Union; laying the largest airfield in Central America; destabilizing Brazil and other Latin American countries; creating a haven for European terrorist organisations, and of being heavily involved in smuggling cocaine to the United States. [46] Several commentators claimed that the tone of Reagan's attack tilted the Congressional balance away from supporting the aid package because it failed to emphasise the purportedly democratic project of the contras. [47] Four days later the aid request was defeated in the House by just seven votes.

The March 20 defeat did not arrest the momentum of PRODEMCA and the pro-contra lobby. Congressional opposition to contra aid had collapsed before and the pro-contra forces set their sights on a new vote towards the middle of the year. One PRODEMCA initiative, the seeds of which had been sewn in

1985, came to fruition in time for a second Congressional debate on contra aid. In August 1985 PRODEMCA channeled a $44,000 NED grant to the Managua-based Permanent Commission on Human Rights (Comision Pemanente de Derechos Humanos -CPDH) for the translation of their reports and their distribution beyond Nicaragua. The CPDH's investigations into human rights abuses, cited frequently by AIFLD in its material, had targeted only the Sandinista authorities, not the contras. In February 1985 a New York-based organisation called the International League of Human Rights sent a delegation to Nicaragua which was accompanied by Robert Leikin - one of the "Gang of Four" Democrats. The delegation's principal source of information was the NED-funded CPDH.

The League's 221-page report utterly condemned the human rights performance of the Sandinistas. The mainstream press, not surprisingly, gave the report ample attention. [48] In particular, the report claimed that there were as many as 6,500 political prisoners in Nicaragua. Moreover, the timing of the report coincided with a period of intense Congressional debate and lobbying around the aid issue, thus amounting to what one commentator described as "a contrived coup in the campaign to win Congressional approval for contra aid." [49]

Disclosures connected to the Iran-Contra affair, which began in November 1986, cast a shadow of scandal and illegality over the Administration's campaign for contra aid. Among other things, the OPD, the activities of which were supervised by Oliver North on behalf of the National Security

Council, engaged outside contractors to conduct pro-contra propaganda work. [50] The Iran-Contra hearings also revealed how attempts to change the system of authority inside the contras - a PRODEMCA objective - had suffered setbacks during this period. PRODEMCA had hoped to parade the non-combattant leadership in the form of Cruz and Robello in order to weaken the hold of the Somocistas over the contras. On the day following Reagan's speech of March 16, 1986, Oliver North's assistant Robert Owen sent a memo to North which described UNO's Adolfo Calero - one of PRODEMCA's "freedom fighters" - as a "strongman" propelled by "greed and power". UNO, wrote Owen, was a non-functioning creation of the Administration to "garner support from Congress." [51]

Furthermore, PRODEMCA's Executive Director, Penn Kemble, was referred to in two memos sent from Owen to North, which confirmed the close nature of PRODEMCA's relationship to the National Security Council and the North operation. In one of the memos sent on February 27, Owen wrote that "Penn Kemble believes that FDN and Adolpho (Calero) should be left alone at this time because the conditions are so fragile." [52] In May UNO was still posturing as the political leadership of the contras and claimed to represent the civilian opposition to the Sandinistas, opposition which included trade unions. In a communique issued May 29, UNO stated that Nicaraguan trade union organisations - clearly the CUS and the CTN - had, alongside political and business entities, "confirmed their recognition of the Directorate (of UNO) as the body

responsible for conducting the struggle to achieve peace and democracy in Nicaragua." [53]

On June 25, the eve of the second Congressional decision on the $100 million, President Reagan delivered another nationally televised speech. The speechwriter for the occasion was Bernard Aronson, one of the "Gang of Four" Democrats whose close proximity to the AFL-CIO establishment had been cited as an explanation for his Cold War politics. [54] Reagan invoked the political message of the PRODEMCA advertisments: assisting the contras constituted a noble struggle for democracy. Of the contras, Reagan asked, "Who among us can doubt their commitment to bring democracy to Nicaragua?" The President, assisted by Aronson, scored a victory. Six House Democrats and five Republicans moved over to the contra camp, securing a vote in favour of contra aid by 221 to 209. Yet, on the eve of the vote, opinion poll figures showed clear public opposition to Reagan's contra policy, with 62% against and only 29% expressing approval. [55]

Trade union leaders opposed to contra aid had again raised their voice, but this time in vain. Two weeks before the vote, machinists' leader William Winpisinger appealed to the House: "American workers," he wrote, "have seen the funding for (social) program after program slashed - job training, unemployment benefits...health care, medicare, and social security, etc. Now the Administration wants to squander $100 million in a vain attempt to overthrow the Nicaraguan

government." [56] IUE President Bywater, too, sent a letter to House members selected on the basis of IUE membership in their Congressional districts, urging them on behalf of the 175,000 IUE members to vote against the aid package. [57] Following the vote Bywater wrote to Sheinkman, "The outcome was an outrage - particularly in terms of the number of Democrats who succumbed to Reagan's pressure and red-baiting. I want to commend you, Jack, for continuing to lead the fight on our side. You know you can count on IUE for continuing support." [58]

At least one union official informed their Congressional representative that their vote in favour of contra aid had not passed unnoticed. CWA Vice President Jan Pearce notified Bronx Congressman Mario Biaggi that "a representative delegation of your constituents would like to meet with you and explain why it is imperative to cast a suspicious eye towards spending one more cent on the contras in the future." A suspicious eye would eventually be cast on Biaggi himself concerning his illegal involvement with the Wedtech corporation. In 1988 Biaggi was sentenced to two years imprisonment for corruption. [59]

The approval of the $100 million in aid to the contras stunned the entire anti-intervention movement. Some argued that the defeat reaffirmed the need for a mass mobilization strategy. Real lobbying, it was claimed, should be conducted on the streets, and not, primarily, on Capitol Hill. Within the unions the achievements of the AFL-CIO convention now

seemed hollow. Even those outside the labour movement had interpreted the Anaheim debate as an important breakthrough in the struggle to change AFL-CIO foreign policy. Clearly, the Federation's call for a political settlement to the Nicaraguan conflict had forced Shanker, Joyce, and others to use PRODEMCA as their main expression of support for the contras and the Reagan policy, unlike during the Vietnam period when the AFL-CIO officially and unreservedly endorsed the Johnson-Nixon war effort. It was surely a major advance for the anti-interventionists that the AFL-CIO had been unable to lend official support to the contras. With the approval of the $100 million, now appeared to be much more modest indeed.

On the very eve of the June 25 reversal by Congress the NLC coordinator Daniel Cantor wrote to actor and former SAG President Ed Asner. Cantor noted that, "The Cold-Warriors still have control over the apparatus of 16th Street (the address of AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington), but they are not winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the rest of labor." The U.S. public opposed contra aid, said Cantor, and further U.S. intervention in Central America. There was no evidence to suggest that the broader union membership was out of step with public opinion on this issue. [60] How could this sentiment be activated in proportions sufficient to disassociate the labour movement completely from a policy of military escalation in Central America? A cohort of anti-intervention activists had achieved impressive results

in their political challenge to the foreign policy establishment of the AFL-CIO, but the limits of this achievement were now apparent. The Cold-Warriors' control over the AFL-CIO's extensive and government-funded apparatus meant that the AFL-CIO was still an important auxiliary to the Administration's policy in Central America and elsewhere. As the initial disappointment regarding the contra aid vote subsided, signs began to emerge that the anti-intervention movement was ready to raise the stakes within the trade unions by soliciting greater involvement from the broader union membership.

1986: The Trade Union Situation in Nicaragua and its Impact on the U.S. Labour Movement.

While the contra aid struggle in and around the U.S. Congress continued, inside Nicaragua the trade unions showed no remarkable changes. The CUS continued to complain of Sandinista harassment, including the arrest and periodic detention of their members. These complaints were communicated to the U.S. and to the international labour movement via AIFLD. The Institute hosted CUS leaders in Washington throughout 1986 where by-invitation-only gatherings heard accounts of Sandinista repression. During the Spring in Managua the pro-Sandinista unions were involved in a May Day campaign which urged more production and more sacrifice to defend the revolution. Union contingents from Costa Rica,

Cuba, Panama, Japan, and the Soviet Union attended the May Day rally, as did a handful of U.S. union activists. One CWA member, Dudley Burdge from Local 1038 in Woodsbury, New Jersey, visited Nicaragua's CWA counterparts in the telecommunication workers union. Burdge discovered that the union, named Blanca Arauz de Sandino (after Sandino's wife), had lost 38 members in the war with the contras. He also relayed their desire for closer links with the CWA. [61]

In August the Washington Area Labor Committee organised a 16-person tour of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The delegation included a number of full-time union workers and was predominantly white-collar. (This author also participated in the trip.) In Nicaragua, although the delegates were sympathetic to the Sandinistas, questions regarding the right to strike and the harassment of the CUS recurred in meetings with both pro and anti-Sandinista union leaders. [62] The pro-government union organisations such as the CST, ATC, FETSALUD, and ANDEN, considered strikes to be destructive in the context of Nicaragua's prevailing political and economic situation. The CST, in particular, stressed that the ban on strikes was voluntary; government action against strikes was only necessary for those "against the process."

All the pro-Sandinista federations claimed to regard the right to strike as valuable to workers, one that should be re-introduced once the emergency had passed. However, Eduardo Garcia, leader of the agricultural workers' federation ATC, referred the Government-union tension on this question, and

claimed that, "We (the ATC and the FSLN) have a conflict concerning the right to strike." Leaders of the health workers' federation FETSALUD described the right to strike as a "historic right..a civic weapon to make sure our demands are met." [63]

The pro-FSLN union leaders also voiced other concerns. Garcia, for example, made a general complaint against government officials who "say they operate in the interests of workers..but there are certain things that serve the government institutions but they don't necessarily protect the worker." [64] The teachers' federation, ANDEN, 80% of whose 12,000 members were women, complained that government bureaucracy had interfered with efficiency and called for more de-centralized decision-making. Wages were too low, but this was attributed to the prevailing wartime conditions. [65]

The CST's controversial affiliation to the pro-Moscow WFTU was also raised by the Washington delegation. Many anti-interventionists regarded the affiliation to have been a tactical blunder, one which had made their work in the U.S. trade unions more difficult. CST leader Lucio Jiminez defended the move; the WFTU, said Jiminez, had been the only federation to encourage joint action between the various trade union internationals, a position rejected by the AFL-CIO and many ICFTU affiliates (See Chapter One). Jiminez also attacked the Cold War divisions in the international labour movement. The Nicaraguan working class, he said, had forced unity on the Sandinistas in 1978 at a time when when factional

differences had impaired the FSLN's ability to fight Somoza. A similar unity should be accomplished, said the CST leader, between the different sections of international trade unionism. [66]

The question of international affiliations was also raised with Garcia: why had the ATC followed the CST and also joined the WFTU? Garcia stated that "We would not win friends by affiliating (to the WFTU). Rather, we would lose them. We think it is very possible to have the solidarity, interchange, and support from workers in the U.S. who are interested, without formal affiliation." The health workers federation, FETSALUD, had also not aligned itself with either the ICFTU, WFTU or the smaller "social Christian" WCL. [67]

The activities of AIFLD and the CUS were also discussed by the pro-Sandinista unions and the Washington delegation. The CST attacked the CUS for allying itself with big business and for its timid opposition to U.S. intervention. CST representatives from the Port of Corinto were even more critical. Corinto had been a scene of CIA sabotage of Nicaraguan oil-storage facilities in 1983 and an arena of CUS-CST rivalry. AIFLD had made charges, echoed by President Reagan, that the Sandinistas had coerced workers into pro-government unions. Andre Sabine, General Secretary of the Corinto Longshoremen's Union, met the Washington delegates in Corinto, where he was accompanied by other union officials and rank and file members of the union. Sabine indicated that he had been a member of the CUS during the Somoza period. During

the dictatorship, said Sabine:

> The leadership of the CUS would take it upon themselves to go and negotiate with the dock owners here, and then they would go to fancy restaurants with the Administration. They were for the capitalists.

Another longshoreman remarked:

> The CUS leadership never consulted the members about the content of a contract. In one example, they made a contract where they brought in a ship which had old scrap metal and we got practically nothing for unloading it. The difference now is that the leadership consults with the rank and file...The CUS leadership - Guthrie and Espinoza - were always in Managua. [68]

The representatives of the Longshoremen strenuously denied Sandinista interference in their decision to affiliate with the CST, although they conceded that, following the insurrection, "some of the workers continued to support the old leadership." [69]

The Washington delegation met the CUS in Managua where they sought clarification of the CUS's position regarding the contras. That AIFLD and other top U.S. union officials favoured contra aid was clear; AIFLD, however, had consistently argued that this was also the position of the

CUS. CUS national official Oscar Baca Castillo stated, "We always opposed the Somoza system, and we see that the contras are a successor to that. Logically, then, we do not support the contras." But had the CUS condemned the contra insurgency? "We have never condemned their intervention as such...but we are against all intervention in Latin America, be it from the USA or the Soviet Union." Were the Sandinistas "worse than Hitler" as Doherty had claimed on the eve of the Anaheim convention? "I don't think the Sandinista Front is capable of killing us, although both ourselves and the FSLN know there have been abuses. We do have international friends who sometimes exaggerate the situation." Pertaining to AIFLD, Baca Castillo complained, "The Institute has created many problems for us. Their representative in 1983 (Joseph Bermudez) made statements on behalf of the CUS and almost provoked a split." [70]

No section of the unarmed or internal opposition to the Sandinistas had by this time declared themselves to be supporters of the contra's military campaign - and the CUS was no exception. Furthermore, given the Sandinistas' attack on the imperialist intent of AIFLD, the CUS were perhaps wise to distance themselves somewhat from the Institute. To shift the beam of suspicion in another direction, it was possible that the CUS's interpretation of the situation in Nicaragua differed from that suggested by AIFLD, but the CUS needed the Institute's generous funding to remain in existence.

During the AIFLD-sponsored tour of the U.S. by the CUS and other union representatives around the time of the AFL-CIO Convention, Irving Brown and Doherty themselves appeared to differ with each other regarding the AFL-CIO's position on the contras. Brown had said that no Federation support for the contras existed. Doherty, however, implied that such support was imminent. (See Chapter Seven) Alvin Guthrie, the CUS leader known throughout the international labour movement either as a victim of Sandinista harassment or as a counter-revolutionary accomplice to U.S. intervention, reportedly sat silent and motionless as Doherty made his "worse than Hitler" remark about the Sandinistas on the eve of the Convention. AFSCME staff member and the coordinator of the Washington committee's tour of Central America, Fred Soloway, witnessed the incident. Following the pre-Convention meeting Soloway solicited Guthrie's response to Doherty's comment. Guthrie apparently said that he did not seek a contra victory because, unlike the Sandinistas, the contras would certainly kill him. [71]

The cautious rhetoric of the CUS may have stood in marked contrast to the outpourings of AIFLD, but the CUS - Guthrie's remarks aside - seemed to share AIFLD's view that the contras were a legitimate political force and not just a mercenary army in the service of a foreign power. The CUS stood for dialogue and reconciliation as an alternative to the war of two extreme ideologies, namely Marxism-Leninism and Somocista-anticommunism. "Mistakes have polarised the

Nicaraguan people," said Baca Castillo, "whereas for some the contras constitute some kind of hope." [72]

The Washington committee's tour contributed to a series of favourable first-hand accounts of the Sandinista's direction of the Nicaraguan revolution, accounts which took their place alongside the other arguments against U.S. intervention. The Labor Report stated that the revolution was eminently defencible from a trade union standpoint because Nicaragua had made enormous advances in vitally important areas of social welfare, had introduced a land reform and had involved the Nicaraguan people in the construction of a new Nicaraguan Constitution. [73] Individual unionists also contributed to this positive assessment of the revolution's achievements. Milt Tambor, staff representative of AFSCME Local 25 made a contribution to the first newsletter of the Michigan Labor Committee For Democracy and Human Rights in Central America. The newsletter itself marked the official beginning of the committee's activities and was circulated to the five hundred Locals across the state. Following his visit to Nicaragua Tambor noted that, "For a country in the midst of war, such free political debate and discussion should be considered remarkable." [74]

The President's report in the ILWU's newspaper Dispatcher continued in this vein, noting how the Sandinistas "had vastly improved the quality of life for the average Nicaraguan and appears to enjoy solid majority support" [75] Dudley Burdge from CWA Local 1038 in New Jersey observed the

Telecommunication workers' high level of enthusiasm for their union and for its contribution to the revolution. [76]

Positive accounts of developments in Nicaragua, however, were mixed with stories of arduous struggle. Burdge described how the telecommunications workers, "performed their duties with a rifle in one hand and telephone equipment in the other." [77] Clearly, the revolution now depended on the physical, moral, and intuitive resources of the working class for its very survival. With the Nicaraguan economy spluttering on one cylinder, and overburdened by the huge economic and human costs of war, talk of day-to-day survival had all but replaced the discourse on building a new society. The Central America Historical Institute (CAHI), a Managua-based Jesuit research organisation sympathetic to the government's social project, warned that "A real economy of resistance and survival will have to go much deeper than simple appeals to the working class and peasantry to work with more discipline." In fact, "labor indiscipline has grown in the productive sector," due to "the drop in real salary levels of the laboring class." CAHI echoed the complaints of some pro-Sandinista union leaders: government officials had shown "little confidence in the peasants, characterizing them as dispersed, backward, and unable to incorporate modern technology and increase production." [78]

Broad sections of the population considered the government guilty of economic mismanagement but, argued the Jesuit group, political support for Sandinistas remained firm.

However, workers were now compelled to take survival initiatives either as individuals or as family and community groups. This involved meeting inflation with barter and taking over and controlling government distribution channels. The pro-Sandinista agricultural unions, UNAG and ATC, had facilitated initiatives among cooperatives and small growers to explore different means of popular control over production and consumption. The CAHI report indicated, "These initiatives are much more widespread than the examples of worker consciousness that fill the pages of the daily (Sandinista) papers." [77]

Neither wing of the anti-intervention movement in the unions, that is, the solidarity and nonintervention forces, were inclined to delve too far beneath the surface events in the Nicaraguan union movement, or into the economic situation in which it attempted to operate. For the solidarity forces such as those behind the Labor Report the task was to fight intervention, not to publicly advance a socio-economic analysis of the Nicaraguan revolution. The utterances and arguments of leading Sandinistas, including union leaders, would suffice, given the Goliath nature of the forces against the revolution. Yes, the revolution had problems, but its biggest difficulty was the actions of the U.S. government. All energies, maintained the solidarity activists, must be directed against imperialist intervention. For the nonintervention forces the record of the Sandinistas was also a secondary factor. Disposed to a more critical evaluation

of the Nicaraguan situation and Sandinista rule, they were, nonetheless, emphatically opposed to U.S. military intervention. Whatever the situation inside Nicaragua, U.S. intervention was sure to make matters worse.

It is important to stress, however, that the situation in the Nicaraguan trade union movement continued to impact significantly on the state of the conflict over Central America in the U.S. trade unions. For anti-interventionists attempting to forge relations with the Sandinista unions, it was not just the survival of the revolution that was important, but also the methods used to ensure its survival. In the trade union sphere it was important for the leaders of the Sandinista unions to maintain at least some degree of vitality, a plurality of ideas and a sense of vision. The internal challenge to Cold War unionism in part depended on the health and character of the external challenge and the Sandinista unions were key custodians of such a challenge. If the Sandinista unions degenerated into skeletal and lifeless objects, unable to mobilize the rank and file, the solidarity wing of anti-intervention trade unionism in the U.S. might quickly become demoralised. For the issue here was not which of the two "models" of trade unionism was the most successful because neither class-based Marxist-Leninist unionism or Cold War unionism based on class-collaboration could register any astounding material successes in such dire economic conditions. No, the real contest was between possibilities. For many U.S. anti-interventionists, even

those uncomfortable with aspects of Sandinista policy, the revolution embodied hopes of real social change in Nicaragua. If the revolution could resist both internal degeneration as well as external aggression then the prospects for progressive change throughout the Americas, including the United States, would be significantly enhanced. The other possibility, that being the triumph of the counter-revolution - with which the CUS and AIFLD were clearly associated - was too disturbing to contemplate. For many anti-interventionists the stakes were as high as this.

Despite profound economic worries, generally favourable reports about the Sandinistas appeared to have a ripple effect in the U.S. trade unions and reinforced opposition to the contras. AFGE at its 1986 convention adopted a Report on National and International Affairs which stated, "The conditions of workers and their unions have improved under the Sandinista government, particularly in regard to land reform, health care and literacy, despite the U.S. economic blockade." [80] In an interview, AFGE's President, Ken Blaylock, harked back to his visit to Nicaragua in 1983: "I saw Nicaraguans teaching their people to read and write and do basic math...I saw Eastern bloc teachers and educators down there helping them set up schools and helping them with outreach programs...And what do they get from America? They get the military and the contras and the terror raids." [81]

The Industrial Union Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO - representing large industrial unions like the UAW - condemned

the contras at its convention, but, unlike the full AFL-CIO convention, registered no similar condemnation of the Sandinistas. [82] At AFSCME's convention contra aid was also firmly opposed. Particularly significant was the position adopted by the Steelworkers' (USWA) convention held in September. The statement on Central America declared that "War can no longer be considered a legitimate instrument of foreign policy." The U.S Government was condemned for "financing a war of terrorism against the people of Nicaragua." [83]

The role of anti-intervention activists in shifting the steelworkers' position offered tangible evidence of the effects of continued agitation. Twenty-five USWA local officers signed a letter to the union's Canadian president, Lynn Williams, urging him join them in opposition to Reagan's policies in Central America. [84] Reagan's policies, they argued, were harmful to steelworkers, "and (to) all other working people in the U.S." The 25 endorsed an anti-intervention resolution passed by USWA District 1 at its convention. USWA anti-interventionists then made a written appeal to convention delegates under the heading "Solidarity and Self Interest: The Connection Between Steelworkers and the Crisis in Central America." [85] The USWA had seen its share of crisis in the pre-convention period. The strike against the USX corporation (formerly U.S. Steel) had been long, bitter, and ultimately unsuccessful. William's keynote address to the convention attacked the multinationals and

urged an explicit rejection of the national chauvinism frequently encouraged by the Steel industry employers. The employers wanted steelworkers, said the USWA President, to attach blame for their domestic situation to the worker overseas. Williams said, "We do not intend our actions to have a negative effect on our working brothers and sisters around the world who are forced to toil for barely subsistence level wages." The convention issued a call for international trade union unity: "The time has come for the labor movement to form a strong united front worldwide in dealing with the multinationals." [86]

While some unions appeared reluctant to attack the Sandinistas, to others they continued to be emblematic of communist expansion and trade union repression. In the 470,000-member AFT, anti-intervention activists had become vocal and active. However, Shanker continued to be a forceful and articulate defender of Cold War unionism and U.S. foreign policy. The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) in April protested Shanker's pro-contra position at Anaheim, and claimed that Shanker had violated the anti-intervention resolution passed at the AFT convention in 1979. At the CFT gathering a delegate urged those on the convention floor who opposed U.S. intervention in Central America to rise to their feet. According to one source, "The entire convention rose. President Shanker smoothly responded, 'I get the message.'" [87] At the national AFT convention in Chicago in July, the same stand-up protest was, however, less successful. In a

session for college teachers an AFT member from Philadelphia urged delegates to stand in opposition to the leadership's resolution on Central America. Roughly one third of the delegates responded. On the main floor of the convention a resolution attacking the Sandinistas was carried with a comfortable majority although the debate itself prompted a fist-fight between some delegates that caused the convention to be temporarily adjourned. [87]

By late 1986, resolutions or executive action by the union leaderships had put the vast majority of the main AFL-CIO unions in the anti-contra camp. To this list needs to be added important non-AFL-CIO unions, such as the ILWU, the UE, the UMW and the 1.8 million members of the NEA. Scores of smaller unions which made up over a third of AFL-CIO affiliated members had by this time taken no public position on the question of the contras, and three major AFL-CIO unions remained pro-contra. These were the AFT, the Bricklayers (95,000 members), and the Seafarers (80,000). [89] The New York-based ILGWU remained officially neutral although its President, Sol Chaikin, had signed the PRODEMCA statement which called for military aid to the contras.

Conclusion.

The period following the AFL-CIO's full convention in Anaheim marked an increase in official trade union opposition to the Reagan Administration's policy of so-called covert war

against the Sandinista regime. However, a minority faction of trade union leaders had along with AIFLD openly agitated for military aid to the contras, and, in so doing, aligned themselves with an assortment of Cold War liberals and anti-union conservatives from political, intellectual, and business circles.

The DIA and AIFLD had during this same period observed the Reagan Administration's refusal to implement the reform proposals embodied in CADO and recommended by the Kissinger Commission. While Administration inaction was (somewhat belatedly) acknowledged and criticised by Kirkland, Doherty and others, AIFLD and the DIA were still prepared to support Administration efforts to advance a military "solution" to the crisis in Central America, and, in so doing, violate the spirit of the Anaheim compromise. Furthermore, AIFLD in particular had demonstrated that, while it strongly encouraged a relatively innovative and visionary reform agenda (CADO) to address the root causes of the Central America crisis, the Institute regarded this reform agenda as subordinate to the Administration's goal of defeating the FMLN and overthrowing the Sandinistas.

In 1986 the NLC and the broader anti-intervention movement had suffered a serious setback with the passage of the $100 million contra aid package and began to scrutinize its own tactics and methods. In the trade unions opposition to the contras had deepened and the NLC had issued statements to that effect. However, Congress had demonstrated how

detached it was from public opinion on the contra aid issue; towards the end of 1986 it was clear that anti-interventionist pressure on Congress had not brought the desired results.

While enormous attention was being payed to the events in Washington and Managua, developments in San Salvador were posing new challenges to U.S. policy in the region. Chapter Five described how the Duarte Government had quickly lost substantial trade union support following its failure to implement promised reforms related to the AIFLD-sponsored Social Pact. Duarte's election had, many observers believed, been a consequence of AIFLD-encouraged trade union support for his Christian Democratic party; the dispute over the Social Pact had therefore weakened the U.S.-backed government's base of support. This problem for U.S. policymakers was compounded by the steady re-emergence of the left trade unions. By mid-1985 Duarte had authorised the use of military force against strikers and accused them of being terrorists and communists. The AIFLD-supported federation, the UPD, continued to be wracked by splits and controversy, some of which revolved around AIFLD's alleged interference and financial manipulation of the UPD unions. In late 1985 AIFLD facilitated the formation of a new pro-Duarte federation, the CTD.

The next chapter documents the continuing revival of the left unions in El Salvador during late 1985 and 1986 and the increasing connection between these unions and the anti-intervention trade unionists in the U.S. Furthermore,

it documents AIFLD's role in building parallel unions, and its efforts to discredit the ascendant left unions.

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16. For more information on the NED see T. Barry and D. Preusch, AIFLD in Central America,: Agents as Organizers. Resource Center, Albuquerque, N.M., 1987. See also Rev. Carol Somplatsky-Jarman, National Committee on Religion and Labor, N.Y. Report on the NED and the FTUI, AFL-CIO, 1988. Some instances of controversy emanating from the AFL-CIO's involvement with the NED are worth mentioning. In late 1985, NED money, flowing through the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI), was delivered to the centre-right French trade union federation Force Ouvriere (FO). The FO acknowledged receiving $380,000 and an additional $575,000 which went to a purportedly far-right anti-communist student organization. Carl Gershman told the New York Times (November 11, 1985.) that the AFL-CIO funded the FO because its chief rival was perceived to be the communist CGT. The student group National Inter-University Union (UNI), founded in 1968 as a reaction to the left-wing student demonstrations of the period, was believed to be connected to the neo-fascist Service For Civic Action. The NED eventually suspended its funding of UNI, "until," said Gershman, "it had satisfied itself that the charges about the group's affiliation with the French extreme right were not true." The Paris daily newspaper Liberation broke the story of NED and UNI in late November 1985. Irving Brown of the DIA told the newspaper that the CGT "could destroy France." (For an English translation of the interview, see International Labour Reports, "Reagan's Secret Funding of FO." Jan-Feb 1986.)

Elsewhere, in the Philippines, in February 1986 The Nation (Timothy Shorrock and Cathy Selvaggio, "Which Side Are You on AAFLI?" Feb. 15, 1986) reported that the AFL-CIO's Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI -the Asian equivalent of AIFLD) channelled $3.2 million of NED money to the pro-Marcos federation Trade Union Congress of the Philippines in an attempt to counter the growth of the left wing May First Movement (KMU).

With AAFLI joining AIFLD as a focus of criticism, soon the AFL-CIO's African-American Labor Center (AALC) came under scrutiny. The AALC was accused of maintaining links to unions in South Africa affiliated to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha group as a means of opposing the more militant and pro-ANC Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). In March 1986, COSATU decided not to accept AFL-CIO money because of the Federation's links with the U.S. Government through the

NED and the Department of State, (See Anne Newman, "Is American Support Dividing South African Labor?" Africa News, June 2, 1986.

NED-funded operations also came to light in Britain. $49,000 reportedly went to the Labour Committee For Transatlantic Understanding, a pro-NATO propaganda group opposed the unilateral nuclear disarmament and which orientates its work in the direction of trade union officials. (See International Labour Reports, op. cit.)

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21. See Holly Sklar, Washington's War on Nicaragua (Boston, Ma: South End Press, 1988) pp. 313-314.

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39. NLC. TL to Congress, March 4, 1986.

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16, 1986, "We Support Military Assistance to the Nicaraguans Fighting For Democracy."

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56. William Wimpisinger, President IAM, TL to members of the House of Representatives, U.S. Congress, June 13, 1986.

57. William Bywater, President IUE, and Edward Fire, Sec.-Treas, IUE. TL to selected members of the House of

Representatives, U.S. Congress, June 13, 1986.

58. William Bywater, President IUE. TL to Jacob Sheinkman, Pres. ACTWU, June 27, 1986.

59. Jan Pearce, V.P. CWA District 1. TL to House Representative Mario Biaggi, June 27, 1986.

60. Daniel Cantor, Coordinator NLC. TL to Ed Asner, former Pres., SAG, June 24, 1986.

61. Dudley Burdge, Nicaraguan Telephone Workers: Maintaining and Expanding Service in War-Time Conditions. Distributed to "CWA Folks Concerned About Central America" May 15, 1986. For a description of May Day in Managua, see LRCA, May-June, 1986.

62. All the tour participants were interviewed by the author during the course of the trip. All were strongly anti-interventionist and generally supportive of the Sandinistas. However, the Sandinista's handling of the trade unions was a source of considerable debate. Moreover, the Washington unionists, in meetings with the pro-Sandinista union leaders, stated that U.S. trade unionists regarded restrictions on the right to strike in Nicaragua as cause for concern.

63. WALC meetings with Eguardo Garcia, leader of the agricultural workers' federation ATC, Managua, August 22, 1986; Lucio Jiminez and three other members of the Executive Board of the CST, Managua, August 26, 1986; "Modesto" and "Sylvia", two representatives of the teachers' union ANDEN, Leon, August 25, 1986; meeting with Alberto Seguella, international relations officer of the health workers' federation FETSALUD, Managua, August 27, 1986. All meetings taped by author; interpreter, Larry Drake; transcribed by author.

64. Garcia, (ATC) ibid.

65. Modesto and Sylvia, (ANDEN) ibid.

66. Jiminez, (CST) ibid.

67. Garcia, (ATC) ibid.

68. WALC meeting with leaders and members of the longshoremens' union, Corinto, August 23, 1986.

69. ibid.

70. WALC meeting with Oscar Baca Castillo, national officer of the CUS, August 27, 1986; taped by author; interpreter Larry Drake.

71. Interview, Fred Soloway, chairperson WALC and editor of AFSCME's newspaper Public Employee, August 27, 1986.

72. Baca Castillo, (CUS) op. cit.

73. LRCA, March-April 1986. The first draft of the Constitution, completed in September 1986, included provisions guaranteeing the right to strike, equal pay for equal work, and other trade union freedoms.

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83. USWA. "World Affairs." Res. 47, USWA Policy Resolutions. 1986 Convention, Pittsburgh.

84. 25 local officers of USWA. TL to USWA Pres. Lynn Williams, July 15, 1986.

85. Broadsheet circulated by anti-interventionists at the USWA convention, 1986, "Solidarity and Self Interest: The Connection Between Steelworkers and the Crisis in Central America."

86. Michael Bayer, "Class Confrontation in Steel,"

Political Affairs (CPUSA) October 1986.

87. LRCA, May-June 1986.

88. Interview Jean Weisman, op. cit.

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CHAPTER 9

TAKING SIDES: U.S. TRADE UNIONS AND THE POLARIZATION OF SALVADORAN LABOUR 1986-87

San Salvador: The FENASTRAS Convention

Following the AFL-CIO convention at Anaheim in November 1985 anti-interventionists turned their attention to another labour movement gathering, this time in San Salvador. The event, staged on November 7-9, was the annual convention of the largest left federation, FENASTRAS.

The relationship between anti-intervention forces and FENASTRAS had grown increasingly strong since 1980, partly because of the presence in the U.S. of FENASTRAS representative Francisco Acosta. The increased level of personal interaction between U.S. anti-interventionists and their counterparts in El Salvador had already become a very significant factor both in the struggle in U.S. labour and in the revival of left unions. Acosta had led a semi-nomadic existence before receiving office space at the IAM's headquarters in Washington, D.C. He had performed union work in Toronto, with ACTWU in New York City, and with AFGE in Washington. The NLC's successful STECEL campaign which

culminated in the release of eleven Salvadoran electrical workers from custody in 1984 and the East Coast tour were examples of constructive collaboration between anti-interventionists and FENASTRAS. Acosta's presence in the U.S. ensured that AIFLD's positive version - and vision - of El Salvador did not go unchallenged in the movement. Following the STECEL victory Acosta thanked Kirkland for his written intervention on behalf of the detainees: "Unfortunately, the campaign against unionists in my homeland continues. Enclosed is a list of 51 who have been assassinated by death squads, arrested, or "disappeared" this year (1985)." [1] Not only had Acosta brought a different perspective of the Salvadoran situation to the AFL-CIO leadership, he had also addressed scores of trade union rank and file audiences across the U.S.

The FENASTRAS convention commenced with two members of the Executive Board, elected twelve months previously, absent. Both had been victims of the death squads. One was the leader of the fisherman's union; the other was head of a transportation workers' union. At the convention FENASTRAS adopted a "Platform of Struggle" which demanded salary increases, the construction of a national workers' parliament to debate the situation in the country, and for a National Forum to be established to encourage the participation of the popular movement (defined as unions, small businesses, professionals and intellectuals) in formulating a solution to the Salvadoran conflict. The Platform also called for renewed government-guerilla dialogue, the right to strike, the

demilitarization of worksites and the unconditional release of all political prisoners. [2] The convention was attended by 300 FENASTRAS delegates from 23 unions claiming to represent 90,000 Salvadoran workers - only half of which were legally recognised by the Government. The attendance was substantially higher than the convention of 1984.

The U.S. contingent to the event numbered 35 - a considerable advance on the handful of observers able to attend the previous year. Unionists in either official or personal capacities attended from a broad cross-section of U.S. unions. A member of IUE Local 201, where the East Coast tour had registered a controversial impact, also attended. In his report to the (Boston) North Shore Labor Council, Don Gurewitz described how, "Everyone at the FENASTRAS convention knew about the debate at the AFL-CIO in Anaheim. They are all pinning their hopes on the U.S. labor movement." [3] Nine unionists attended from the Bay Area and the Labor Network placed a paid advertisement in the Salvadoran daily newspaper El Mundo which demanded that the Duarte Government "stop the repression of workers." [4]

The convention also marked the return to El Salvador of Hector Recinos, who, little over a year before, had been a prisoner in Mariona for his activities with STECEL. Recinos, who had previously been nominated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize by Mockton University in New Brunswick, Canada, was met at the airport by jubilant workers. [5] In his keynote address to the convention Recinos attacked the AIFLD-supported

agrarian reform as "a measure to intensify control and repression in the countryside." More generally, he noted how the repression was "shifting from indiscriminate terror to selective terror...In the face of (labour movement) resurgence, President Duarte has resorted to the old gimmick of linking the labor movement with the guerillas in order to justify his anti-labor policy." [6] Immediately after the convention Recinos would again leave for Europe.

The FENASTRAS convention took place amidst deepening industrial unrest. For example, postal workers occupied a central post office in the capitol to protest a government order which permitted the transfer of workers anywhere in the country without notice. [7] Water workers, too, were on strike. Their union (SETA) had suffered mass firings following an "illegal" stoppage that began in May 1985 protesting the killing of two workers. Their bodies were discovered on May 1st, days after being detained by the Arce Battalion, the government's "immediate reaction" unit. [8]

The FENASTRAS convention also coincided with an important moment in a union dispute which, similar to STECEL, would be taken up by anti-interventionists and transformed into a sizeable campaign. The Telephone and Telecommunication Workers of El Salvador (ASTTEL) went on strike as the convention began. Humberto Centeno, a leading ASTTEL member, appealed to the FENASTRAS convention for support. Centeno and his two teenage sons had been dragged out of their home at 6.00 a.m. by ten armed men in civilian clothes and taken to

the headquarters of the Treasury Police where Centeno was released but his two sons kept as hostages. The two were accused of being supporters of the FMLN because of their involvement of a Boy Scout project distributing food to the impoverished street dwellers in San Salvador. The strike of ASTTEL members unfolded as news of the arrests spread and supportive industrial action by other unions shut down all automatic telephone and teller services. The U.S. delegation went to the Treasury Police headquarters and asked to hear the charges made against the Centeno brothers. One U.S. unionist, Ann Loughlin, president of the Office and Professional Employees, Local 29 of Oakland, California, told the San Francisco Examiner that, "My union sent me here to observe union rights. But I didn't expect to get involved so directly." [9] The delegation was informed that Jose and Jaime Centeno (aged 22 and 19 respectively) had been arrested for their involvement in an October 26 kidnapping of the head of Civil Aviation.

The Salvadoran Telecommunications Agency (ANTEL) had been a scene of industrial and political conflict since 1979. In February 1980 the ANTEL worksites were militarized and in November union organiser Francis Moran and his female partner were abducted by death squads and decapitated. The union, then called ATANTEL, was disbanded. Later in 1980 ANTEL's security forces were positioned on the roof of the ANTEL building from where they fired on a huge peaceful demonstration of workers protesting union repression. Some

57 marchers were killed, hundreds wounded, and the show of force ended street demonstrations for nearly five years. [10] Late 1984 marked a period of resurgent union activity at ANTEL, with ASTTEL beginning to operate openly. In March 1985, reportedly under the direction of AIFLD, ANTEL created a parallel union called ASTA. According the ASTTEL's leaders AIFLD then succeeded in getting ASTA affiliated to the International Federation of Postal, Telephone, and Telegraph Workers (PTTI). In May, ASTTEL, claiming over 5,000 members, staged a two-day stoppage to protest the failure of ANTEL's management to fulfill its contractual obligations. Duarte met with the union on June 1, 1985, and assured them that ANTEL would comply with the terms of the contract. Then came the arrest, on November 8, of Centeno and his two sons. Amnesty International later declared the Centeno brothers had endured 14 days of torture. [11]

Charles Kernaghan, a freelance union photographer from New York, took a personal interest in the Centeno case and visited the Centeno sons a few weeks after their capture. Kernaghan recorded: "When I saw Jose and Jaime in Mariona the scars on their arms still remained from their torture with electric shock. Their lungs were impaired, especially those of the younger son Jaime, from the time when they were forced to inhale lime during their interrogation." [12]

By late November the strike was over and ANTEL management took reprisals against several activists who were arrested, tortured, and forced to sign confessions which

stated that the strike had been engineered by the FMLN. On January 10, 1986, ANTEL fired Raphael Sanchez, the General Secretary of ASTTEL. In newspaper interviews ANTEL accused Sanchez of "running around with communists." The New York-based District 65 of the UAW reported the story in the Distributive Worker: Sanchez's lawyer, who had claimed that the dismissal was contrary to Salvadoran law, received death threats and dropped the case.. [13]

Once again, a U.S. union contingent had come into direct contact with El Salvador's turbulent political and trade union situation and witnessed for themselves the hostility of government and military forces towards trade unionists. The 35 visitors made considerable use of their experience in El Salvador and several newspapers, particularly on the West Coast, ran stories about their experience. [14] A few weeks after her return from the FENASTRAS convention, Ellen Starbird of the Santa Clara County Central Labor Council wrote to U.S. Ambassador Edwin G. Gorr in San Salvador. Part of her letter focused on the accusation, echoed by AIFLD, that FENASTRAS had links to terrorist organisations. She wrote:

> This accusation is an Orwellian distortion of the word terror. Only in a nation whose government fears human dignity could every effort to improve the lot of the people of El Salvador be construed as "terrorism". That these acts are crimes swiftly revenged, while thousands of murders go unpunished because death squads enjoy an extraordinary impunity from the law, speaks harshly of the Duarte regime and its judicial priorities. [15]

The FENASTRAS convention marked another important moment in the revival of the left trade unions in El Salvador.

Moreover, the convention, and the events which surrounded it, strengthened the personal and political links between U.S. anti-intervention trade unionists and their Salvadoran counterparts. It was perhaps premature, at this juncture, to suggest that a "new internationalism" had begun to take shape which rivalled the official internationalism conducted by the DIA. How could the actions of such a small number of U.S. trade unionists compete with the recognised authority of the AFL-CIO? One should note, however, that the Cold War unionism conducted by the DIA did not require or request rank and file involvement. In terms of numbers of individuals involved the internationalism of the anti-interventionists was perhaps already as extensive as the DIA's, although the disparity in resources available to the two contending groups was too enormous to calculate. The DIA had literally millions of U.S. taxpayers' dollars (and several hundred thousand dollars from the AFL-CIO's budget) to pursue its objectives. In contrast, the majority of anti-intervention trade unionists payed their own way to El Salvador (and Nicaragua) and their material solidarity efforts usually amounted to whatever miscellaneous items could be squeezed into a suitcase or backpack.

The political character and pedigree of the anti-interventionist challenge to AIFLD and the DIA remained, in many respects, the most significant factor. However, much depended on the performance of Duarte; if the Salvadoran president maintained his precarious political position, and retained the loyalty of the AIFLD-supported unions in the CTD,

then the challenge to AIFLD's own legitimacy in the U.S. labour movement might be seriously arrested.

Left Unions Unite: The National Union of Salvadoran Workers.

In late 1985 the DIA issued a major statement on El Salvador. Accompanying the highly positive assessment of the Duarte period was a rancourous condemnation of the FMLN. The statement declared that the tactics of the guerillas were a deliberate ploy to provoke repression from the Salvadoran right. Furthermore, the purportedly pro-FMLN unions were not legitimate trade union entities and were, in any case, minuscule in comparison to the so-called democratic unions. Only 3,000 workers, declared the DIA, were in the pro-guerilla unions, but they continued to be "well-financed and vocal." More than this, the left federations were "expert at misleading foreign delegations - labor included - as to the good faith and moderation of their aims." Visiting delegations - doubtless a reference to the NLC and other anti-intervention tours to El Salvador - "do not have extended experience of Marxist-Leninist tactics." [16]

The escalation of strike activity in El Salvador throughout 1985 indicated one of two things: either the DIA had seriously underestimated the strength of the left unions, or, if such strikes had indeed not been "political" or left inspired, there existed a level of legitimate union discontent that the DIA had not been prepared to fully acknowledge. More

transparent, perhaps, was the omission of any mention of the crisis in the UPD and divisions in other important unions, such as those in the SUTC, FESINCONSTRANS and the UCS which threatened the leaderships of those unions favoured by AIFLD. [17] Furthermore, there was no mention of the June 1985 raid on the occupied hospitals, the assassination of union leaders, or of the UPD's call for AIFLD's expulsion from El Salvador. The statement also conflicted considerably with Amnesty International who documented "torture, disappearance and extra-judicial executions directed at Salvadoran trade unionists" throughout 1985. Moreover, said AI, a "campaign of intimidation of the trade union movement" was in full swing and the Salvadoran authorities had attempted to weaken trade union activism by murdering trade unionists for allegedly supporting the FMLN. [18]

Towards the end of 1985 the political and economic pressure on Duarte intensified. In a U.S. Embassy memorandum in late December, Ambassador Edwin Corr expressed concern that "The worst in terms of labor unrest is probably still to come, and the developments on the labor front in the first quarter of 1986 could present the President with the most serious challenge to his power to date." [19] This proved to be an accurate prediction. In January 1986 Duarte introduced a Program of Economic Stabalization and Reactivation, essentially an IMF austerity package introduced to improve the investment climate and stimulate exports. [20] The immediate consequences for workers was registered in increased prices

for gasoline, agricultural products, basic foods, medicine, and public services. [21] Since 1981 workers' living standards had fallen by more than one-third in both industrial and agricultural sectors, and were now sure to fall even further. [22]

The economic measures, known as the paquetazo (package), provoked an immediate labour movement response. On February 8, the UPD, FENASTRAS, ANDES, STISSS, COACES, the Treasury Ministry workers (Asociacion General de Empleados del Minesterio de Hacienda -AGEMHA), and the CLAT-affiliated CTS formed with others the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (Unidad Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadorenos -UNTS). According to FENASTRAS, 2,000 unionists from 100 union organisations met in San Salvador to discuss and endorse demands which called on Duarte to repeal the proposed attacks on workers and to enter into a dialogue with the FMLN to end the war. [23]

The UNTS organised a demonstration around these demands on February 21 which some observers claimed was the largest in San Salvador since 1980. UNTS leaders claimed 80,000 participants; the University of Central America (San Salvador) said that nearer 60,000 were mobilised. AIFLD claimed the figure was closer to 12,000 and the Salvadoran government estimated that only 7,000 were involved. [24] Whatever the true figure the demonstration marked a new polarization of the Salvadoran trade unions. The formerly pro-Duarte UPD, CTS, and others, were now marching against the government they had

earlier helped bring to power. These centre unions were now part of loose alliance with strong left unions like ANDES and FENASTRAS.

The AIFLD-supported unions, however, responded quickly to the situation. On February 24, a group calling itself the Christian Democratic Workers' Movement published paid advertisements in several newspapers which implied that the UNTS had taken its platform from a broadcast of the FMLN's clandestine Radio Venceremos. In the ensuing days these unions renamed themselves the National Worker Peasant Union (Unidad Nacional Obreros y Campesinos -UNOC) and issued a declaration of principles on March 7. On paper the differences between the program of the UNOC and the UNTS were not immediately evident. The UNOC, too, called for genuine (rather than "tactical") dialogue to achieve peace. One source commented that members of the divided UPD unions were unsure as to which of the two federations they now belonged. [25]

Possible confusion notwithstanding, UNOC organised a huge March 15 demonstration in San Salvador which was widely reported to be 50% larger than the UNTS march. However, the Washington Post claimed that "The Government had to bus in large numbers of marchers, and the effort reflected the degree of its concern." [26] The New York Times declared that "most of the marchers, who were trucked in by government backers, seemed to be doing only what they were told." [27]

In April the UNTS staged a joint forum with the small traders group FENAPES. Before the 600 participants the UNTS announced it would establish a commission to build international trade union solidarity and both the UNTS and FENAPES called for the expulsion of AIFLD from El Salvador. [28] Leading UNOC figures responded by pointing out that the UNTS was supported by the far-right ARENA party; ARENA's leader, the notorious Roberto D'Aubuisson had congratulated the UNTS on Salvadoran television, apparently because ARENA opposed Duarte's proposed tax increases and therefore shared with the UNTS a desire to see the paquetazo defeated. [29] Two UNOC leaders wrote to the Washington Post:

> North Americans may think it strange that the far right and the far left are allies against the Duarte government and the democratic unions of El Salvador. But to us, it is an old story. Both extremes know that if democracy wins in El Salvador, they lose. With enemies like that, we know we must be doing something right. [30].

The formation of the two new union coalitions, UNTS and UNOC, took place as strike action and repression reached new levels. In a partial general strike called by the UNTS on April 24, 70,000 workers stopped work demanding wage increases; shortly afterwards the human rights office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, Tutela Legal, reported that 376 civilians were assassinated during the first three months of 1986, not including victims of military operations and bombings. [31]

U.S. Unionists and the UNTS.

Anti-intervention trade unionists in the U.S. greeted the formation of the UNTS with enthusiasm. The Labor Report described the activities of the UNTS as "a dramatic expression of the sharpening conflict between El Salvador's workers and the Duarte government." [32] Michael Urquhart, co-chair of the Washington Area Labor Committee, challenged the Salvadoran government's view of the UNTS before the Congressional Sub-Committee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. "Any attempt," said Urquhart, "to dismiss this coalition as a shadow organization that is the creation of the guerillas is totally mistaken," although the AFGE member did refer to a number of UNTS unions who "have traditionally maintained positions close to the FDR." [33] David Dyson, the NLC coordinator, remarked that the UNTS opened new possibilities for U.S.-Salvadoran trade union relations, possibilities that could involve "a new model of initiative and independence within the progressive sectors of U.S. labor." [34]

For noninterventionists who felt uncomfortable supporting the openly Marxist-Leninist FMLN, the UNTS re-opened the space formerly occupied by the left christian democratic and social democratic leaders of the FDR. It was widely asserted that FDR-FMLN political-military alliance, formed in a period of intense repression, disguised serious ideological and tactical differences between the two formations. The military containment of the FMLN and the

re-emergence of the unions appeared to pull the gravitational centre of the struggle away from rural guerillaism towards the urban mass movement, a development which probably pleased most of the union leaders on the NLC.

AIFLD's opposition to the UNTS could be measured by the speed in which the Institute facilitated the formation and activation of UNOC. The Institute's role in the creation of UNOC was confirmed in a March 1986 U.S. Embassy memorandum which praised the tireless efforts of AIFLD. The memorandum disclosed that "AIFLD (had) held a meeting with Salvadoran democratic leaders in Miami several weeks ago to discuss ways of unifying democratic labor, and UNOC grew out of that meeting." [35] It is worth noting that the platform of the UNTS closely resembled the essentially economistic agenda of the AIFLD-sponsored UPD which, two years earlier, had been at the centre of the Social Pact upon which Duarte won the election. For AIFLD, however, the problem was not the platform of the UNTS, but the militant and confrontational methods that the new federation might employ in order that it might be advanced. However strident the UNOC platform might be on paper, its policy was to support Duarte. Militant action not only exposed the infirm nature of Salvadoran capitalism and its incapacity to raise real living standards according to workers' demands, it also stretched the patience of the right-wing. Both AIFLD and the Reagan Administration feared that, should the death squads be unleashed to deal with the "subversives", Duarte's democratic opening could be lost

under a fresh avalanche of repression. Congressional liberals might then campaign to cut U.S. aid to El Salvador which, if successful, might greatly enhance the possibilities of an FMLN triumph. The programmatic similarities between the UNTS and the UNOC, therefore, did not reflect the differences in the conservative agenda of AIFLD and UNOC leaders and the more radical agenda of the UNTS.

The UNTS was formed by the flowing together of two distinct tributaries in the Salvadoran trade union movement. One was a contingent which once invested faith in Duarte and the other was a group which had already seen their reform agenda - and their cadre and organisations - brutalised by the 1980-83 repression. The social (and trade union) base of the Duarte regime had been squeezed by the war and economic crisis. AIFLD's financial and political weight continued to be an important factor in maintaining support for Duarte although charges of bribery and manipulation, accompanied by calls for the expulsion of AIFLD from El Salvador, had contributed to the growing delegitimization of AIFLD in the ranks of the U.S. trade unions.

AIFLD's War on the UNTS: The "Captured Documents."

AIFLD's opposition to the UNTS spread to the U.S. media. In March, the U.S.'s FENASTRAS representative, Francisco Acosta, criticised Duarte's trade union record in a letter to the New York Times. AIFLD's Chief of Information Services,

John Heberle, responded by accusing Acosta of "not being candid about what his organization represents." FENASTRAS, he alleged in the Times, had met with the pro-Soviet WFTU and regarded the FMLN to be its vanguard. Furthermore the UNTS, in which FENASTRAS played an important role, was merely a hollow shell "run by a handful of self-appointed leaders." [36]

In May AIFLD resurrected the contents of the documents captured from the FMLN-PRTC leader Nadia Diaz by the Salvadoran army one year earlier. (See Chapter Five). Duarte had himself referred to the documents before he ordered the militarization of the Social Security hospitals in June 1985. Now AIFLD, in association with the NED-funded Freedom House, released translated excerpts of the documents, claiming that their contents exposed a three-level FMLN strategy pertaining to the trade unions. Firstly, the FMLN attempted to undermine the Social Pact during Duarte's first months as president; secondly, the FMLN would attempt to encourage strikes in order to destabilize the Salvadoran economy and, thirdly, the FMLN would work to create an anti-Duarte union coalition. [37]

Union anti-interventionists appeared unaware of the twelve-month time lag between the purported capture of the documents and their translation and release by AIFLD and Freedom House. Indeed, there was an obvious advantage in delaying the release of the documents. Recent events appeared to confirm that the FMLN's "strategy" had been successful: the Social Pact had disintegrated, a left union coalition had

emerged, and strikes were on the increase. On the day of the AIFLD-Freedom House press release the UNTS had mobilized a major demonstration in San Salvador - if ever there was a time to implicate the Salvadoran trade unions with the armed left, it was now. Furthermore, anti-intervention unionists could not debate the contents of the documents because to do so would appear to acknowledge their authenticity.

Close inspection of the documents, however, reveals that the 'infiltration' of the unions by FMLN militants amounted to no more than hopeful overtures made in the direction of one or two leaders of the UPD. At that time the UPD was already beginning to show signs of disunity as a result of Duarte's failure to honour the Social Pact. Furthermore, the UPD dissidents who came into contact with the guerillas had, according to one of the documents, "not shown any commitment to the FMLN." [38] Elsewhere, a document containing the minutes of a PRTC (a faction of the FMLN -See Chapter Five) meeting on September 24, 1984, - sometime after the UPD dissidents had had made their controversial television appearance - recorded:

> It is questionable which side they (the UPD dissidents) would join if there was a split (in the UPD); with the CL*, or with the Latin American Institute For Free Labor Development (sic-AIFLD). The communique they issued proclaiming themselves in favor of a dialogue prompted the..Institute (AIFLD) to cut its aid from them. (Note: *CL is an unknown entity.) [39]

Another document exclaimed that "the terms of our relationship with the cocos (code name for UPD dissidents) is not very clear." [40]

The documents revealed FMLN-PRTC approval of the trade union situation but suggested at the same time that their influence over that situation was quite limited. The impending split in the UPD had indeed enhanced the prospects of a new federation coming into existence which, one document predicted, "would make it possible to mobilize the trade union bases and achieve one of the aspirations of the labor movement: the creation of its own organization, an organization of which it feels a part and for which it can heed its calls and mobilize itself." [41] Other passages further suggested labour movement independence from the guerillas. One read, "In the mass sector, there are constant strikes, mobilization causing fear in the streets, and propaganda. But all of this is scattered. Efforts and plans are not articulated which detracts from their force and political impact." More explicitly, "It is urgent to establish a minimum level of coordination in the worker sector, since each organization maintains its own expectations of hegemony.(.)" Somewhat ironically, FENASTRAS, denounced repeatedly by AIFLD for following the dictates of the FMLN, was criticized for its desire to strengthen itself while paying only lip service to MUSYGES, the coalition of left unions which collapsed under the weight of the 1980-83 repression. [42]

Several apparent tactical and political differences within the component factions of the FMLN also raised questions as to the guerilla's ability to provide a consistent lead to its sympathisers in the unions. At one point in the documents, the PRTC criticised the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCES- an FMLN affiliate) for its "reformist, economist proposals." The PCES had not been consistent, said the PRTC, with "the plan of different organizations that make up the FMLN about the tasks of the working class." Indeed, PCES influence was described as the "basic problem." [43]

All told, the documents revealed that the FMLN's relationship to the trade unions was highly problematical and uneven. Nevertheless, AIFLD maintained that the documents provided evidence that "some of the individuals who profess to be authentic trade unionists are something else entirely," and that the UNTS was an FMLN front. [44]

AIFLD used several opportunities to attempt to discredit the UNTS. (For example, see AFL-CIO News, August 2, 1986). The Salvadoran federation, it was claimed, was being directed by the Salvadoran Communist Party and that the left unions were attempting "to hide their most obvious connections with the Communist international trade union movement, and thus gain a degree of respectability in the U.S. and Europe." Faced with this challenge, noted AIFLD, democratic trade unionists needed a guiding principle to help them make the appropriate characterization of acts of repression. It was necessary to determine whether individuals were being

targetted for their trade union activities or for their political or revolutionary activities. As John Heberle of AIFLD expressed it, "A violent Communist revolutionary should not claim that the attacks on his person or property are the result of his trade union activities." Presumably using this criteria, Heberle concluded, "Practically all anti-union activities in El Salvador have ceased under...Duarte." [45]

Perhaps unexpectedly, the captured documents provided an insight into the FMLN's view of AIFLD. In these purportedly internal records of a revolutionary organisation, reference was made to AIFLD's manipulation and bribery and its adherence to the U.S. Government's "imperialist project." AIFLD was described as "carrying out conspiratorial work" in the unions. Certain unions were purportedly destined to act in a manner pre-arranged "by imperialism at the assigned moment." It was said of the AIFLD-supported construction workers' union, FESINCONSTRANS, that "They offer money. Behind all this is the American Institute for Free Labor Development." [46] Interestingly, throughout the documents AIFLD's alleged bribery and corruption is discussed not as propaganda to discredit the Institute, but as fact.

The contents of the captured documents (accepting for argument's sake their authenticity) suggested that AIFLD deliberately misinterpreted the evidence in order to characterize the UNTS as an FMLN front, when, if anything, the documents supported the view that the UNTS was a militant and autonomous federation pursuing its own objectives. As

FENASTRAS representative Francisco Acosta expressed it in a letter to the AFL-CIO Executive Council, "The demands of the UNTS are not anti-democratic; they are a serious challenge to the President (Duarte) to live up to his word...Demands which have been endorsed by groups as diverse as labor unions, small businesses, and the churches, are not communist demands, but the result of the process of democracy at work." [47]

Dual Unions, Sister Unions and Union Rights.

While AIFLD continued to pursue its traditional methods in El Salvador, anti-intervention unionists continued to chart new territory. The primary emphasis of their work remained trade union rights. FENASTRAS in Washington continued to release urgent communiques to U.S. unions when Salvadorans were abducted. In early May AFSCME and SEIU officials in southern California protested the detention of several bus drivers by the armed forces. [48] Also in May the first newsletter under the heading "Labor in El Salvador" was released by the Information Center of the Salvadoran Trade Unionists in Exile (CISSE). CISSE, based in Chicago, stated that helping trade unionists who had been detained or tortured was central to its view of international solidarity. [49]

In mid-1986 the West Coast city committees founded the "Salvadoran Labor Defense Network" (SLDN). The SLDN's coordinators collected lists of trade unionists who agreed in advance to have telegrams bearing their names forwarded to

Salvadoran and U.S. authorities when news of an abduction was verified. This ensured that immediate pressure was brought to bear on those who violated trade union rights. During its first five months of operation the SLDN was activated on five separate occasions. As the Portland (Oregon) Labor Committee recorded in its newsletter, "We have been successful, often in coordination with solidarity strikes and demonstrations in El Salvador, in gaining the prisoners' quick release in three of the cases." Those freed were the General Secretary of the water workers union SETA, a local leader of the Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (FEDICPADES), and Febe Velasquez, a leading officer of FENASTRAS. [50]

The Velasquez case was the most dramatic and significant of the SLDN's early accomplishments. Since the FENASTRAS convention in late 1985, anti-intervention unionists were frequently on first-name terms with the 24-year old Salvadoran. Velasquez, General Secretary of a textile union at CIRCA, a factory which makes jeans for Levi Strauss and Calvin Klein, was also the FENASTRAS official responsible for international relations. On July 7 1986 Velasquez was kidnapped by the Treasury Police. The abduction triggered an immediate strike and demonstration by her 300 workmates at the CIRCA factory which was quickly followed by stoppages involving seven other FENASTRAS unions.

The SLDN, in coordination with CISPES and the city committees, sent scores of telegrams to the Treasury Police, Duarte, and the U.S. Department of State. In addition, the

Labor Network on Central America took out a paid advertisement bearing the names of a hundred U.S. trade unionists in the Salvadoran newspaper El Mundo which demanded Velasquez be released. Hours after the advertisement appeared on July 11 President Duarte personally escorted Velasquez from the headquarters of the Treasury Police to the offices of FENASTRAS. [51]

In March 1986 a sizeable campaign was launched by the New York Labor Committee on behalf of the telecommunications union ASTTEL. The two sons of ASTTEL leader Humberto Centeno had been captured in late 1985 and remained in prison (see above -this chapter). The telecommunications agency ANTEL continued to be occupied by the military and key ASTTEL officers remained fired. A steady stream of letters and telegrams pressured Salvadoran and U.S. authorities to cease their obstruction of ASTTEL and to release those imprisoned. On May 20, Edward Cleary, President of New York State AFL-CIO, sent a letter to Duarte. Cleary's protest, however, reflected his lack of commitment to the ASTTEL campaign; the New York State AFL-CIO, he wrote, had heard reports of repression but "other reports indicate that strike actions are being fomented to serve the political purposes of the guerillas...However, we do firmly believe," said Cleary, "that persons accused of a crime are entitled to fair treatment." [52]

In mid-July the New York Labor Committee, in coordination with the NLC, hosted a "labor-congressional" breakfast to promote the ASTTEL campaign. Among the 100 guests

were several union leaders, including Jan Pearce, national Vice President of the CWA and Amy Newell, Secretary Treasurer of UE. The principal Congressional figure was Ted Weiss from New York. Pearce drew the connection between repression in El Salvador and crisis facing U.S. labour:

> The lives of Centeno and his sons are bound up with our lives in the American labor movement..That imprisonment and torture seem to be reserved for the third world nations today should not fool us. Corporate America and our government have used those weapons against the American labor movement at one time or another in our history. And I can assure you that they'll use them get away with it in..El Salvador. Their enemy is our enemy. [53]

The ASTTEL campaign spread to fifteen countries, including Britain. Despite all these efforts the ANTEL management refused even to acknowledge the existence of ASTTEL, although they did find time to comment that the "labor congressional breakfast" was nothing but a gathering of "international Marxists." [54]

The campaign also had opponents closer to home. In early October New York AFL-CIO President Cleary attacked Congressman Weiss for entering into the Congressional Record a resolution passed by the New York Labor Committee pertaining to ASTTEL. In a letter to Weiss, Cleary said, "I regret seeing your name associated with a disinformation campaign designed to undermine the democratic trade union movement in El Salvador." The obvious intent of the ASTTEL campaign, Cleary added, "is to convince Salvadorans that numerous New York trade unionists and political figures oppose U.S. aid to

El Salvador and support the two guerilla-backed Salvadoran trade unions, UNTS and ASTTEL." [55]

Meanwhile in El Salvador the ASTTEL campaign was also being undermined by the activities of AIFLD. In March 1985 AIFLD had reportedly colluded with ANTEL's management and the Salvadoran authorities to establish a rival union to ASTTEL known as ASTA. AIFLD reportedly ensured that the PTTI, an International Trade Secretariat (ITS) of ICFTU-affiliated telecommunications unions, recognised ASTA over ASTTEL, although not without opposition from several PTTI affiliates. [56] The Labor Report accused AIFLD of engineering the affiliation "to rob ASTTEL of desperately needed international support." [57]

The legitimacy of ASTTEL was unexpectedly enhanced, however, when in May 1987 two ASTA Executive Council members resigned and joined ASTTEL. In a press release and communique to the workers of ANTEL they accused other leaders of ASTA of "corrupt, accomodationist, and manipulative acts." Not only did ASTA have no legally affiliated members, they charged, but ASTA officials "take trips to Washington..to meet representatives of the AFL-CIO...The President (of ASTA) receives 1,000 colones (U.S. $200) a month from AIFLD." The communique declared that ASTA leaders had "deceived the U.S. Embassy, the AFL-CIO, and the international community...These pseudo leaders are working for personal profit...and pleasure trips abroad." [58]

Embarrassing as this latest revelation regarding AIFLD's methods may have been to the Institute and the DIA, it remained the case that the substantive demands of the ASTTEL campaign had not yet been achieved. The Centeno brothers were still incarcerated, the union's offices still occupied by the military, and ASTTEL's leaders remained fired. Despite these realities the ASTTEL campaign had been successful in other less obvious respects. Firstly, it demonstrated how one or two serious activists (particularly Charles Kernaghan) with few resources could generate a sustained, visible, and multinational solidarity effort. Secondly, the campaign uncovered more information regarding the character of AIFLD's dual unionism, that is, its conscious decision to establish unions such as ASTA for the purpose of delegitimizing and competing against the more militant left unions. Classified U.S. Government documents eventually provided insight into the full scope of AIFLD's dual unionism tactic to combat the influence of the UNTS (see below, this chapter). Thirdly, the ASTTEL campaign exposed the complicity of international labour movement structures such as the PTTI in perpetuating the priorities of Cold War unionism. In April 1986, the General Secretary of the PTTI, Stefan Nedzynski, travelled to El Salvador and met only with the leaders of ASTA, ignoring ASTTEL completely. [59] Nedzynski also ignored the UNTS, even though two PTTI affiliates, the postal workers (SUCEPES) and the electricity workers (SIES) had joined the UNTS coalition. In May 1987 ASTTEL requested affiliation to the PTTI. They

received no reply. In mid 1989 several ASTTEL activists were brutally assassinated - largely behind the backs of the international labour movement. (See Chapter 11) The ASTTEL case was distinct because it bore the character of an ongoing campaign on behalf of a 5,000-member union. The Velasquez case, in contrast, saw U.S. trade unionists intervene on behalf of one person. In four days the affair was over. In September 1986 the anti-interventionists charted new territory when FENASTRAS's U.S. representative Francisco Acosta addressed the California Joint Board of ACTWU in Los Angeles. Acosta presented the Board with details of a three week old strike of a FENASTRAS affiliate, the Industrial Textile and Cotton Workers Union (Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria Textil y Algodon Salvadorena -STITAS) in San Salvador. STITAS workers had occupied Velasquez's workplace, the CIRCA factory, which made jeans for Levi Strauss and Calvin Klein for the U.S. market, and demanded higher wages and the reinstatement of sacked workmates. At the meeting California ACTWU decided to establish a sister union relationship with STITAS. A videotape expressing solidarity was produced and sent to San Salvador. [60]

California ACTWU immediately began to exert pressure on the Levi Strauss company in the U.S. which claimed that it could not affect the strike negotiations because it did not own the factory - the owner was a Salvadoran businessman living in Miami. The company then complained that the action had impaired their relationship with ACTWU and threatened the

future of its U.S. operations. Interestingly, in a letter to Jack Sheinkman, a company spokesperson saw fit to refer to AIFLD's characterization of FENASTRAS:

> I am not going to get into the debate over whether or not FENASTRAS is, as the American Institute For Free Labor Development has apparently stated, dominated by certain factions of political life in El Salvador. In times when we are making significant efforts to avoid the further erosion of Levi Strauss and Co.'s domestic employment force, it seriously makes us wonder whether or not it is first, worth it, and second, whether or not ACTWU is seriously interested in maintaining and strengthening the kind of healthy working relationship we have both agreed we need to be successful in our highly competitive industry. [61]

Meanwhile in San Salvador Duarte declared the strike illegal and threatened to use troops to reclaim the factory. FENASTRAS in Washington then announced that six union leaders had commenced a hunger strike in San Salvador to call national and international attention to the strikers' demands. On October 2 California ACTWU, supported by CISPES and the Labor Network on Central America, mobilized a picket of the Levi Strauss headquarters in San Francisco. On the same day, CIRCA management agreed to talks. CIRCA succumbed to the workers' main demands and within days the strike was over. [62]

It is difficult, of course, to accurately evaluate the precise impact California ACTWU's actions may have had on the successful outcome of this dispute. More significant, perhaps, was the thinking which underscored the initiative. In recent years, Levi Strauss and Co. had closed several plants in the U.S. organised by ACTWU, preferring to

sub-contract work to operations like CIRCA where wage rates, at $4.00 per day, were approximately one tenth of comparable union rates in the U.S. To counter such developments ACTWU like other U.S. unions had turned to Congress for assistance in the form of restrictions on textile imports. Congress had either repelled such moves, or, as in August 1986, proposed legislation which fell to a Presidential veto. California ACTWU confirmed that the decision to forge a sister union relationship with STITAS was motivated by concern for its own membership as much as it was for the strikers in San Salvador. As the San Francisco Chronicle expressed it: "American unions have long called for protectionist legislation to stop the flow of jobs offshore. The textile union (ACTWU) has taken a different tack, reasoning that direct intervention to improve the lot of Salvadoran laborers will make the remaining American textile workers more secure." [63]

The ACTWU-STITAS episode appeared to mark the point where anti-intervention sentiment overlapped with material trade union interests in the context of a specific struggle. To say that the incident constituted a "model" for a new internationalism was perhaps a serious overstatement. Nevertheless, the affair constituted an important milestone in the ongoing effort to develop an alternative to Cold War unionism and its support for U.S. multinationals.

AIFLD Targets the UNTS.

The formation and consolidation of the UNTS provided an outlet for the internationalist impulse of anti-intervention unionists in the U.S., nourishing both in the process. The fortunes of the UNTS therefore constituted an important factor in the challenge to Cold War unionism and, perhaps, the development of a new internationalism for both the U.S. and Salvadoran trade union movements.

The UNTS had displayed a serious approach to international work from the moment of its formation. In November 1986 the UNTS, working with CISPES, organised a U.S.-El Salvador "In Search of Peace" conference in San Salvador. The success of the event hinged around the participation of U.S. trade unionists, although invitations were extended to others in the CA/AIM in the U.S. The delegation from the U.S. numbered 176, of which only 45 were trade unionists, a figure the city committees considered to be disappointing. At a December meeting of the East Coast committees in Boston it was generally agreed that the U.S. unionists had been "shamed by the organizational efficiency of the UNTS...in the (East Coast) region we did not build sufficiently. Nobody above the rank of local president attended." [64] This negative appraisal aside, the conference further strengthened the relationship between the UNTS and anti-intervention union activists.

The UNTS also played a role in providing relief to the victims of a devastating earthquake which hit San Salvador on October 10, 1986. More than 1,500 Salvadorans died and an estimated 200,000 were made homeless by the disaster. During the relief operation one UNTS activist was shot and killed by the security forces, allegedly for looting. FENASTRAS reagarded the killing as a political retribution which took advantage of the post-quake turmoil. The AIFLD-backed UNOC was apparently represented on the official relief committee established by the authorities. [65]

As these events were taking place the UNTS was being targeted by AIFLD and the U.S. Embassy. Just days before the "In Search of Peace" conference, Ramon Mendoza, General Secretary of the UPD, announced the UPD's withdrawal from the UNTS. Anti-intervention unionists had made much of Mendoza's attacks on AIFLD during the previous two years; Mendoza's action was, therefore, more than a minor embarrassment. At first the reason for the departure of Mendoza and the UPD was unclear. Then in March 1987 freelance journalist Frank Smyth revealed in The Nation the true character of the schism. U.S. Embassy memorandums sent to Secretary of State Shultz that had been leaked to the Washington-based anti-intervention organisation National Security Archive revealed that $3,000 of AIFLD's money was used to lure Mendoza away from the UNTS. The UPD, because of its former partnership with Duarte, had, in the eyes of the Embassy, provided "the left with a democratic facade to manipulate international labor and

opinion." It was hoped that the UPD's departure would help delegitimize the UNTS as a democratic union coalition. Furthermore, the UNTS had received "strong support" from the U.S. trade unions and thus constituted "a threat to democratic labor." [66]

That the U.S. Embassy worked with AIFLD to destroy the UNTS is beyond doubt. As the memorandum to Shultz stated:

> UNTS unions have accused UPD Secretary General Ramon Mendoza of "selling out" and have charged AIFLD, the Embassy, and the PDC [Christian Democratic Party] with attempting to destroy the UNTS (a charge we accept).[67]

AIFLD, it was recommended, should now "direct its policy at holding our side together, while continuing to pick off UNTS members one by one." A May 9, 1986, memorandum disclosed that AIFLD and the Salvadoran government had collaborated to establish "democratic unions..either to take over leftist unions or to form rival democratic unions in leftist strongholds." [68] The industries listed were sewage and water, the agricultural ministry, telecommunications, the postal service, Housing Institute employees and high school teachers. [69] The Embassy then informed Shultz:

> In the past twelve months, U.S. interests have been greatly served by the overall trends in Salvadoran labor. UNTS now stands demuded of its democratic facade and we have about as clean and neat a division between democratic and communist labor as we are ever likely to get in El Salvador. [70]

Interestingly, months before the memorandums were published, AIFLD, commenting the UPD departure, used almost identical terminology. The UPD action, AIFLD stated, "strips the UNTS of practically all its democratic facade." [71] In April 1987 the UPD expelled Ramon Mendoza for corruption. A UPD spokesperson announced that Mendoza had embezzled more than $5,000 in UPD funds. [72]

Conclusion.

The developments in El Salvador during 1986 virtually closed the door on the arguably progressive features of AIFLD's intervention. The Reagan Administration had ignored AIFLD's CADO proposals; the Salvadoran oligarchy had obstructed the AIFLD-assisted land reform, and living standards for workers continued to fall. The Duarte presidency had been weakened by the war with the FMLN and its base of support, not least in the labour movement, had atrophied. AIFLD had lost the UPD, set up the CTD and then closed it down, and finally established the UNOC as a rival to the newly formed UNTS. It was difficult to determine which of the two major federations was at this time numerically the larger given the conflicting claims of the respective leaderships, the existence of dual or parallel unions, as well as other difficulties. Despite the U.S. Embassy and AIFLD's apparent obsession with numbers, it remained clear that the UNTS was not only the more militant and vibrant of the two

formations, but that this had resulted in concrete gains for workers. (See Chapter 11) In contrast, AIFLD and UNOC appeared more concerned with competing with UNTS unions than struggling to reverse the falling living standards of its own membership. The evidence suggested that AIFLD used dollar bills to greater effect than it did political argument in fighting its battles in El Salvador. Moreover AIFLD, anxious to perpetuate the view that El Salvador was well on the way to democracy, denied that serious abuses of trade union rights still occurred. The Institute had gone as far to suggest that in the event of torture or murder of an individual, U.S. trade unionists should first ask themselves if the victim had been so treated because of legitimate union activities or because of their support for the revolutionaries. [73]

The formation of the UNTS illuminated the connection between the internal and external challenges to Cold War unionism. A nascent and unofficial internationalism now existed between the left Salvadoran unions and the city based committees and a layer of union officials in the U.S. The U.S. labour movement, at least as far as Central America was concerned, now had two internationalisms: the State Department funded, quasi-corporatist, Cold War internationalism of AIFLD and the DIA, and the more anti-capital, anti-imperialist internationalism of the anti-intervention unionists.

Both "internationalisms" had, as yet, failed to activate a mass base. The anti-interventionists had reached thousands in educational activities, speaking tours and the like, but

the pool of activists remained no more than a few hundred. AIFLD and the DIA had responded to the anti-interventionist challenge with their own smattering of one-day conferences and forums but these seldom, if ever, reached the rank and file. The AFL-CIO's international activities had historically been the domain of "experts"; there was no real evidence to suggest that the DIA might wish to take its arguments to the broader membership.

Chapter Ten returns to the situation in the U.S. trade unions following the Reagan Administration's successful bid to secure $100 million for the Nicaraguan contras. It describes how the internal challenge to Cold War unionism was qualitatively enhanced by the decision of the NLC and national religious leaders to call for a major demonstration against U.S. intervention in Central America and Southern Africa. It also documents the part played by certain labour movement figures in the Iran-contra affair which began in November 1986.

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CHAPTER 10

THE APRIL 25th MOBILIZATION AND THE IRAN-CONTRA SCANDAL

Anti-intervention activity in U.S. trade unions had registered significant gains in the period 1980-1986. A network of city and state based union committees performing Central America work had been established; the NLC was now a stable entity (although hardly an irresistible force); the international affairs establishment of the AFL-CIO - an edifice of Cold War unionism in the international labour movement - by this time had to contend with an unprecedented level of scrutiny from other sections of the U.S. labour movement. Moreover, both AFL-CIO and U.S. Government foreign policy had become not only subjects of open and heated debate, at certain levels in the movement they constituted the most contentious and time-consuming items. (See Chapter Seven).

Despite these achievements U.S. intervention in Central America continued to escalate and the DIA and AIFLD continued to spend millions of Department of State dollars pursuing objectives in Nicaragua and El Salvador which many believed responded more to the priorities of the Reagan Administration than the needs of the U.S. labour movement. For FY1986, AIFLD's total revenues were $16.9 million of which $12.4

million came the Department of State, $4.2 million from the NED via the FTUI, and $314,408 - approximately 2% of the total - came from the AFL-CIO. [1]

This chapter focuses on developments in the U.S. labour movement following Congress's approval of the $100 million contra aid package in the Summer of 1986 until mid-1988. In particular, it focuses on the first major and nationally coordinated expression of anti-intervention sentiment from the trade union rank and file in April 1987. The April 25th Mobilization, as it became known, saw thousands answer the call of the NLC and 55 national religious figures to march in Washington against U.S. intervention in Central America and Southern Africa. Because of the prominent role of religious leaders in the Mobilization, a brief comparison is made between the growth of anti-intervention sentiment in the churches and the trade unions. Another major area of concern of this chapter is the trade union connection to the Iran-contra scandal and the developments which occurred in its wake.

CA/AIM At the Crossroads.

Congress's decision on June 26, 1986, to approve $100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan contras was a major setback for the entire Central America/Anti-Intervention Movement (CA/AIM). The CA/AIM now stood at an uncertain crossroads. As one source expressed it, "Over the last seven years we have

accomplished much: we have created a major political movement, educated hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Americans, and as a result we have been a factor restraining the Reagan Administration from carrying out a full-scale intervention in Central America...(However) for the solidarity movement as a whole, the heady days of growth in the early eighties have certainly slowed." [2] Commenting on the increasingly intense and hemispheric nature of the crisis, another writer urged, "We must broaden our conception of 'anti-intervention' and rethink our very definition of 'solidarity'. To do so our vision must see more than Central America." [3] Another commentator criticised the CA/AIM activist milieu for viewing themselves as "adjuncts to the struggles of other peoples. For them, revolutionary struggles are elsewhere, a reflection of their deep pessimism about building a movement for social change in the U.S." [4]

The disappointment regarding the $100 million contra aid decision was compounded by the fact that attempts in the Spring of 1986 to pressure Congress to reconsider U.S. Government aid to El Salvador also came to nought. CISPES launched a major campaign of street activities and lobbying which generated some concern on Capitol Hill regarding human rights and the Salvadoran airforce's bombing of civilians. The Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs heard first-hand accounts of the air-war being waged against the FMLN-occupied territories. Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams maintained that independent human rights

organisations in El Salvador had reported "imaginary violations" in order to serve the propaganda objectives of the FMLN. AIFLD's Executive Director, William Doherty, assured the hearings that major steps forward had been made in the trade union field; unions could strike, organise, and protest government policy. Doherty agreed that air attacks had resulted in the "occasional killing of civilians" but it was the FMLN's human rights abuses that were responsible for the increase in the number of deaths. [5]

Sections of the CA/AIM began to argue that the contra aid vote and the CISPES campaign demonstrated the limited value of Congressional hearings and conventional lobbying. Furthermore, the CA/AIM was, some suggested, too scattered and diverse. One group asked, "Shall we continue as a fragmented movement with the major sectors - labor, solidarity, and religious - going their separate ways? Or shall we unite and create a broad...national coalition that can bring these sectors together?" [6]

By mid-1986 concern over Central America was now accompanied by growing attention to the convulsive developments in South Africa. On June 14 approximately 100,000 attended an anti-Apartheid demonstration in New York City. The success of the demonstration was partially attributed to the existence of a single national organisation to coordinate the protest. In September representatives from a number of anti-intervention groups met at the IAM's retreat at Placid Harbour, Maryland, to discuss ways of building more

effective opposition to U.S. policy in Central America. Following the event the NLC's coordinator, David Dyson, informed Sheinkman (now President of ACTWU following the retirement of Murray Finlay) of the thrust of the discussions: information leaked from the White House indicated that the Reagan Administration was deeply divided regarding Nicaragua and how best to deal with the Sandinistas. Elliot Abrams and the State Department purportedly favoured a massive increase in contra aid and CIA support to help the insurgents win a piece of Nicaraguan territory and to then pronounce the formation of a provisional government. Admiral John Poindexter and the National Security Council, on the other hand, considered the contras to be militarily incapable of securing the needed territory and favoured staging a "terrorist" incident followed by direct U.S. intervention. [7]

This situation, urged Dyson, required immediate action. National union and religious leaders should call a major demonstration. CISPES and the solidarity groups had conducted three national demonstrations in five years, events which attracted between 30,000 and 75,000 participants. Larger displays of public opposition to U.S. intervention were needed with the trade union movement leading from the front. Dyson wrote, "I do not need to tell you how historic an event like this would be. The proposed action would represent the broadest opposition to U.S. intervention since Vietnam." The scheduled date for the demonstration was April 25, 1987. [8]

Dyson's proposal came at a time when the NLC appeared particularly inert. Plans to bring representatives of the UNTS to the U.S. were shelved because the NLC, who had applied for the required entry visas, was unprepared to wage a campaign to ensure that the applications were not rejected by the Department of State on grounds that the UNTS was a subversive organisation. At a September regional meeting of representatives of the East Coast city committees in Washington one unionist commented, "The NLC is frightened of a red-baiting campaign; the leadership seems held hostage." [9]

As talk of plans for a major anti-intervention demonstration spread, individual NLC members began to vacillate. This was confirmed in several instances. For example, plans for a third NLC tour of Central America were jettisoned because NLC members responded negatively to the idea. AFSCME's President, Gerald McEntree, informed Sheinkman: "To begin with, the climate in Nicaragua is rotten, and I don't mean the weather." On October 5, unemployed steelworker Eugene Hasenfus was captured from a contra supply plane shot down by the Sandinistas. Hasenfus was due to face a Nicaraguan court when McEntree wrote, "the show trial may still be going on, or recently concluded. The predictable support for a captured American," claimed the AFSCME leader, "will outweigh the realities of Reagan's interventionist moves." These moves had prompted "a predictably undemocratic reaction" on the part of the Sandinistas who, said McEntree,

continued to harass the CUS. [10]

In another instance the President of the Newspaper Guild, NLC-member Charles Perlik, agreed to act as coordinator of an AIFLD-instigated campaign to assist the 235 workers of La Prensa, the Managua-based newspaper closed by the Sandinistas in late June for its support for the counter-revolution. Perlik approached unions for cash contributions for the "La Prensa Workers' Aid Fund"; the AFL-CIO Executive Council, with no registered objections, launched the campaign with a $10,000 donation. [11] The pro-contra newspaper had already received generous financial assistance from the U.S. Government, via NED and PRODEMCA. Finally, efforts to persuade Richard Trumka, President of the United Mine Workes (UMW), to join the NLC failed. Douglas Fraser, then leader of the UAW, reassured Trumka that many NLC activities "don't require a great deal of time." Trumka, known as a new generation left-winger, ignored the invitation. Trumka's decision, however, probably reflected concern regarding the UMW's possible return to the AFL-CIO. To join the NLC at this time would have risked losing the support of Lane Kirkland and other leading Federation officials for the UMW's affiliation. However, Trumka had in the past been openly critical of the multinationals and expressed the need for more international solidarity between workers. [12]

The Churches and Anti-Intervention.

The decision made in September 1986 to promote a major mobilization against intervention in Central America and Southern Africa called by union and religious leaders provided a focus for anti-intervention work for several months leading to April 1987. Significantly, it was the religious leaders, eight in all, who became signatories to the "Call to Action" before the first union leaders put their names forward. Clearly, a full account of the development of anti-intervention sentiment in the religious community can not be presented here. However, it is necessary to point out that the political and theological shifts in the major denominations have traditionally impacted upon the U.S. labour movement in one way or another. Indeed, the links between the labour movement and the churches which spring from a vast shared constituency of worker-churchgoers makes the distinction between the two communities somewhat artificial.

Among the major denominations the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), because of its huge working class base, is widely perceived to have exerted most influence on the labour movement. For instance the anti-Communist and Cold War sentiment of prominent R.C. leaders was institutionally expressed earlier this century in the formation of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU). By the time of the outbreak of World War Two, says Cochran, "The Catholic Church was... accepted in official society...as a leading

participant in the anti-Communist cause." [13] Another source noted how this impacted on the CIO; during the same period there existed "two extreme poles of power..the Communist pole and the ACTU pole." [14]

During the Vietnam War period leading Catholics such as Cardinal Spellman prevailed upon the Catholic President Kennedy to, as Belden Fields observed, "intercede in defense of the Catholic President Diem and the Catholics of South Vietnam." [15] It was surely no coincidence that prominent Catholic AFL-CIO officials, such as Federation President George Meany, prevailed upon Kennedy to do the same. [16]

The response of certain layers - particularly the active laity - of the RCC and other denominations to the events in El Salvador and Nicaragua during 1979-81 indicated important political and theological changes had taken place in the religious community since the Vietnam period. In particular, the murder of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero and four North American nuns in 1980 (see Chapter Two) resulted in a marked acceleration of anti-intervention activity in many denominations, orders and dioceses, aimed initially against the atrocities of the Salvadoran security forces. [17] In March 1982 - just days after the U.S.-supported elections in El Salvador - five churches in Tuscon, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, and Long Island declared themselves sanctuaries for Salvadoran refugees fleeing the repression [18] Political refugees in the eyes of the Sanctuary Movement were "economic migrants" in the view of the Reagan

Administration, which publicly rejected any notion that Salvadorans might wish to flee a country which had just become a democracy - unless it was to seek fame and fortune in the U.S. By 1985 key Sanctuary Movement activists had been prosecuted and convicted for sheltering "illegal immigrants" [19] and by 1987 considerable evidence had come to light which indicated that the FBI had authorized and conducted break-ins, burglary, and vandalism against sanctuary churches and other faith-based anti-intervention groups concerned with Central America, such as Pledge of Resistance and Veterans Fast For Life. [20] Church or faith-based groups were not the only components of the CA/AIM investigated by the FBI or targeted for official harassment. (See Chapter Eleven for the FBI's probe of CISPES). [21] Nevertheless, such actions testified to the significance of anti-intervention activities generated by the religious community.

While it is not possible to discuss the religious dimension of the CA/AIM in any detail, it is worth noting that the basic trajectory of its historical development to some extent parallels the pattern of anti-intervention activity in the trade unions. Trade unionists and religious activists played a certain role in the movement against the war in Vietnam, but major denominations as well as the bulk of major unions supported the actions of the U.S. in Indochina. (See Chapter Four) Moreover, both the religious community and the labour movement responded to the events in Central America by producing within themselves organised opposition to U.S.

intervention in the region, and a section of church and trade union leaders to greater or lesser degrees supported (and in some cases pioneered) this movement. By late 1986 the broader CA/AIM regarded greater involvement of trade union and religious leaders to be essential in order to qualitatively expand visible public opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America and elsewhere.

It is necessary to add, however, that faith-based activists were more prominent in the early period of the CA/AIM than their trade union opposites. As Van Gosse explains, the former were directly involved in the formation of the principal solidarity groups concerned with Nicaragua and El Salvador, namely Nicaragua Network and CISPES. [22] Moreover, it was activists from these groups that played a major role in developing anti-intervention activity in the unions. (See Chapter Four) [23]

In general, anti-interventionism in the churches was more deeply rooted and perhaps more seriously pursued than was the case in the trade unions. Several factors can be identified which help to explain this. Firstly, the issues of human rights and war, especially following the assassination of Romero and the nuns, were quickly identified as church issues. [24] In contrast, while such matters clearly concerned trade unionists, they were not <u>per se</u> trade union issues as traditionally defined. [25] Secondly, Salvadoran and Central American refugees quickly made an impact on the composition of many U.S. church congregations

and pioneered anti-intervention work in, for example, Salvadoran communities in the Bay Area. [26] Indeed, the Sanctuary Movement was in part modelled on the experience of the border ministry of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tuscon which was forced to deal directly with the needs of homeless and persecuted Salvadorans who had escaped to the U.S. The urgent needs of the refugees therefore propelled certain churches in a clear and frequently militant anti-intervention direction. [27]

In contrast, refugee or emigree Salvadorans were almost completely shut out of the trade unions. In cities like Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco where large Salvadoran communities had mushroomed, working Salvadorans had gravitated towards largely non-unionized service sector and low-wage manufacturing occupations. [28] Consequently Salvadoran refugees were for the most part excluded from the city-based union committees on the West Coast; on the East Coast they played no direct role whatsoever. Perhaps the only clear exception to this general pattern was the United Farmworkers Union of America (UFWA) led by NLC-member Cesar Chavez. The UFWA's efforts to organise California agribusiness brought thousands of Central and South American immigrants into the labour movement, and many UFWA campaigns - including the national "poison grapes" boycott - have been supported by the religious community. [29]

Thirdly, the religious component of the revolutions in Central America, particularly the Theology of Liberation,

immensely strengthened the appeal of anti-intervention activity in the churches. In Nicaragua, the presence of Theology of Liberation priests at all levels of the revolutionary process, including the government itself, helped dispel actual or potential fears that the Sandinistas were building a gulag in Central America. As the Jesuit-run Central America Historical Institute expressed it in 1986, Theology of Liberation Christianity "has served as ferment for the new humanity, a heart within the heart of the revolutionary world" which obliged Christians "not to be Marxists, but to be more Christian." [30]

The class-based trade unionism of the Sandinista revolution resembled Theology of Liberation only in the sense that both constituted radical challenges to an existing orthodoxy (respectively, class-collaborationist unionism as encouraged by AIFLD and its supporters in Nicaragua during the Somoza period, and the RCC's leading clergy who shared the Vatican's disapproval of Theology of Liberation). However, the appeal of such unionism had over an entire period been discredited by its association, formal or otherwise, with the bureaucratic Stalinist model of workers' organisations, i.e. party-controlled unions with no genuine independence. Indeed, the religious thrust of the Nicaraguan revolution was not only largely free of such historical baggage, it was widely considered to be a counterweight to the secular "Marxist-Leninist" perspective of certain Sandinista leaders. [31] Other Christians began to openly consider the

development of an authentic Christian-Marxist hybrid. As one U.S. Christian publication observed, "The Nicaraguan revolution has demonstrated that a new social order in Central America, though strongly influenced by Marxism, will not be a reproduction of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe or Cuba. The possibility exists of creating something quite new." [32] Whatever the interpretation, the Christian component of the Nicaraguan revolution was probably a greater inspiration to a section of liberal-left U.S. Christians than the revolution's trade union situation was to a wide segment of anti-intervention trade unionists. Sandinista harassment of trade unionists both to the left and right of the pro-FSLN unions and the CST's controversial affiliation to the WFTU, whose affiliates included the non-Solidarity unions in Poland and the official unions of other Eastern bloc countries, had not generated much enthusiasm even among U.S. trade unionists who felt otherwise generally sympathetic to the Sandinistas.

A final factor which partly explains why anti-interventionism in the religious community sank deeper roots than in the trade unions is the religious dimension of the New Right. The emergence of the New Right in the late 1970s resulted in a sharp polarisation of the Protestant denominations in particular; the movement tapped into public demoralisation and insecurity following the fall of Saigon and Watergate and advocated an aggressive anti-communist foreign policy. [33] Because of their heterogeneous social base the churches became scenes of sharp confrontation between the

widely divergent contending forces in U.S. politics, such as Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition and Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. Again in contrast, the greater class homogeneity (important intra-class gradations notwithstanding) of the labour movement precluded any similar polarisation. New Right sympathisers in the trade unions, where they existed, did not make themselves heard in a sustained and organised way despite the perhaps fairly high proportion of union members who voted for New Right Republican Ronald Reagan in both the 1980 and 1984 Presidential elections. [34] Moreover, the conflict in the churches revolved around a vast array of contentious issues, such as reproductive rights, prayer in schools and homosexuality. In the labour movement, at least at the leadership level, foreign policy, and particularly Central America, was the only real source of conflict.

When viewed in context of the broader political spectrum in the U.S., the differences between the right wing social democracy of the AFL-CIO Cold Warriors and the more left-wing social democracy of Sheinkman, Winpisinger, and the NLC were, at this juncture at least, relatively minor. Moreover, one side had not declared open and unrestrained war on the other. In contrast, the struggle against an interventionist U.S. foreign policy in the churches, however, was connected to a do-or-die battle with the U.S. right wing and was generally more urgently pursued than in the trade unions. Even the deeper (i.e. "domestic") programmatic differences between solidarity activists (who openly identified with the

objectives of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutionaries) and the AFL-CIO leaders were minimalised by the decision of the solidarity activists to prioritise Central America work above all other union concerns and their decision to support the NLC as the "progressive" wing of the trade union leadership, and, finally, because the general malaise of the labour movement had not yet given rise to major programmatic revisions where more fundamental ideological differences might become apparent.

It is necessary to add that certain elements of the AFL-CIO's Cold War establishment appeared cognizant of the anti-interventionist potential of a political alliance between the left-liberal sections of the religious and labour communities and took measures to obstruct the development of such an alliance. In 1980, leading SDUSA members Penn Kemble and David Jessup, also a prominent AIFLD official, launched the neo-conservative Institute For Religion and Democracy (IRD) which, in 1983, began to publicly attack the National Council of Churches (NCC) in right-wing publications such as Readers' Digest for its purported "pro-communist" bias. Some of the NCC's third world assistance had been directed towards the Sandinista's literacy project; similar projects in Mozambique and Cuba had also been supported by the NCC. [35]

Later the IRD was accused of having used Jessup's senior position in the AFL-CIO in order to appear politically moderate and representative of mainstream labour movement opinion. The NCC called upon the AFL-CIO to disassociate

itself from the IRD. Kirkland refused. The NCC then threatened to not cooperate with AFL-CIO affiliates in their various campaigns. Sheinkman, Winpisinger and other union leaders informed Kirkland that they supported the NCC and several unions issued statements disassociating themselves from the IRD. [36] The NCC's relationship to the NLC union leaders was in evidence when union and religious leaders jointly called for a major demonstration against the U.S. Government's interventionist foreign policy. The period prior to the demonstration (discussed below) also indicated that the NCC still had its enemies in the U.S. trade unions.

The National Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa.

On January 22, 1987, Kenneth Blaylock and William Winpisinger were the first union leaders to follow their religious counterparts and endorse the "Mobilization For Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa." The "Call" was made official in advance of other union leaders confirming their support for the initiative. [37]

The steering committee that was constructed to coordinate preparations for the Mobilization was drawn from five sectors of the CA/AIM: the labour movement, the churches, the so-called "faith-based groups", Central America solidarity and anti-Apartheid, and the anti-war movement. Not surprisingly the committee became a cockpit for advocates of

different political strategies and agendas to argue their respective positions pertaining to a host of issues and considerations. Some argued that not enough blacks, hispanics, or women were being involved in the organisation of the Mobilization. Others lamented the lack of coordinated action and political discipline flowing from the national steering committee to the local coalitions which began to mushroom as soon as plans for the demonstration had started to circulate the anti-intervention and anti-Apartheid communities. [38]

It became quickly apparent, however, that the NLC exercised a virtual power of veto over all the major decisions pertaining to the Mobilization. The NLC opposed a majority-supported proposal to invite representatives of the Salvadoran UNTS and a pro-Sandinista representative of the Miskito indians. Speakers from the ANC and SWAPO, however, were invited. In September 1986 the NLC coordinators, Dyson and Cantor, suggested that the NLC embrace the UNTS as its political ally. The meetings of the steering committee unequivocally demonstrated that the NLC majority was prepared to speak out against intervention, but was not prepared to speak on the same platform as the UNTS let alone enter into a political partnership with the Salvadorans. [39]

The NLC also wanted no association with the organised left and therefore opposed the participation of the various socialist groups such as the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party in the preparations for the Mobilization. It

was somewhat ironic given the degree of NLC influence over the political nature of the Mobilization that the NLC as a committee did not actually endorse the initiative, although almost all the NLC became signatories to the Call. The fact that the NLC members each endorsed the Call helped allay fears that individual union presidents were being pulled towards the position of AIFLD and the DIA. Charles Perlik of the Newspaper Guild, Gerald McEntree of AFSCME, and John Sweeney of the SEIU had each shown signs of drifting in this direction, but all endorsed the Call. So too did William Wynn, the non-NLC President of the UFCW and a likely successor to Lane Kirkland as President of the AFL-CIO.

The NLC's insistence on non-association with the various left groups in the U.S. and the UNTS testified to the degree of trepidation regarding possible "red-baiting" from inside and outside the labour movement. The steering committee, anxious not to jeopardise the participation of the union leaders, acquiesced to the NLC's conditions. However, despite successful NLC efforts to sterilise the project of left-wing and other perceived contaminants, the Kirkland forces spoke out forcefully against the planned Mobilization, which, they declared, was being organised by supporters of the Sandinistas and the FMLN. The NLC also compromised the steering committee by insisting that the committee not publicly challenge the Kirkland-led accusations. The religious leaders, who had suffered similar attacks from the organised right-wing within their denominations, urged the steering committee to register

a collective response. The NLC's wishes again prevailed. [40]

Kirkland's condemnation of the initiative came on March 23, 1987. He attacked "groups seeking to shape AFL-CIO policies from the outside in accordance with their own agendas." [41] Kirkland said it was the duty of the local and regional bodies of the AFL-CIO to respect the Federation's Constitution and conform to the policies decided by the Convention, thereby implying that the resolution passed by the AFL-CIO at Anaheim did not authorise anti-intervention activities which attempted to mobilize the broader union membership. [42]

John Joyce, President of the Bricklayers' union and supporter of PRODEMCA and the contras, circulated a more condemnatory statement to 500 Bricklayers' locals in the U.S. and Canada. The statement advised: "Anyone who knows or remembers the popular fronts put together by the communists in the 1930's will know precisely how the April Mobilization works and what it is all about." [43] Joyce's assistant, Joel Friedman, compiled a 14-page "Analysis of the April 25th Mobilization" which attacked CISPES and the Nicaragua solidarity groups for their FMLN and FSLN sympathies as well as religious or quasi-religious organisations such as the NCC, Witness for Peace, the Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America and the Catholic Quixotic Center. Friedman justified the attacks by indicating that all the organisations had in some way identified with the Sandinista Front or spoke favourably of the Nicaraguan revolution. [44] The

Bricklayers' official also claimed that the NLC members had been duped into endorsing the Mobilization by middle-layer leftists in the union bureaucracy and that full disclosure of the nature of the forces behind the initiative made possible a rank and file revolt in certain unions, such as the CWA, SEIU, and the UFCW. [45] Albert Shanker also condemned the Mobilization in a paid advertisement in the New York Times in April, where he, too, warned of Communist Popular Front tactics. [46]

Right-wing commentators outside the labour movement made full use of the statements of Shanker, Joyce and Kirkland. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, writing in the Washington Post, alluded to the political seriousness of the allegations. She remarked, "No group has more experience with the organizational tactics of the hard left than the U.S. labor movement, and no group has been more deeply involved in the struggle to promote reform and build democracy in Central America." [47] Prominent political commentator Morton Krondrake, writing in the New Republic, disagreed with the popular front comparison made by Kirkpatrick, Joyce, and others. "The reality," wrote Krondrake, "is much more ominous than the (AFL-CIO) perceives. It is not that many well-meaning liberals are being duped by a few leftists, but rather that a vast, committed network of church, labor, peace and justice, student, and women's groups has grown up that opposes U.S. policy in Central America...The movement ends up rooting for the success of the Sandinistas and other Marxist

liberation groups around the world." [48] Perhaps the most extreme attack on the Mobilization came from the Washington Times. On the eve of the march the Times made an undocumented claim that the Mobilization's organizers received $3 million dollars from Libya's President Gadhafi via Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega. [49]

Kirkland's official condemnation of the Mobilization did not result in any of the 24 union leaders, 18 representing AFL-CIO affiliates, withdrawing their endorsements. However, CWA President Morton Bahr reportedly chastised his executive board with the words, "When we are asked to endorse these things let's take the time to check with the AFL-CIO (.)" [50] Stanley Hill, the black Executive Director of the New York based District Council 37, AFSCME, responded differently. On the eve of the rally, Hill took out a large advertisement in the New York Times that urged union members to attend the Mobilization in Washington. Hill explicitly attacked "Red-baiting, Shanker-style!" pointing out that the AFT leader had used "the same infuriating cliches and innuendo we heard in the days before Dr. Martin Luther King's legendary March on Washington in 1963." The union leaders who had endorsed the April 25th Mobilization were, said Hill, "walking away from the old ideas and feeble rhetoric that have served labor so poorly recently." [51]

The individual endorsements made by union leaders proved to be critical in building support within the unions for the Mobilization, and for directing considerable union funding and

resources behind the initiative. By early February 52 cities had formed local coalitions to build for the Mobilization, many with strong union participation. By early April this figure grew to 170. By the time the steering committee staged its final meeting on April 15, 1054 buses and 18 car trains were ready to go to Washington. Significantly, even before Hill made his announcement in the Times, AFSCME D.C. 37 in New York were forced to turn away union members because its 50 hired buses were filled. [52]

The April 25th Mobilization brought between 75,000 and 150,000 to Washington, according to several estimates. (The U.S. Capitol Police estimated 75,000 attended the event) [53] Trade union participation in the event was a reported 30,000-45,000. Unions with the largest contingents appeared to be the health workers NUHHCE (4-5,000), AFSCME (4,000), and ACTWU (1,000). The NEA and the UAW were also well represented. [54] Smaller contingents of workers from unions who did not endorse the Mobilization, such as the AFT, the ILGWU, and the Teamsters were also visible. Leading the march were four national union leaders, Gerald McEntree of AFSCME, Henry Nicholas of NUHHCE, Frank Martino of the ICWU and Kenneth Blaylock of AFGE. [55]

A sister march in San Francisco, also on April 25, attracted between 35-75,000 participants. While union contingents were in evidence - such as several hundred hospital workers from SEIU Local 250 - the bulk of the crowd were activists from the wide array of groups directly

concerned with Central America and South Africa. [57]

The Significance of the Mobilization.

The Mobilization was significant in several respects. Firstly, due to the degree of union participation the character of the march was unique in recent U.S. political history. This visible challenge to U.S. foreign policy came in large part from the broader union membership and not just from the activist strata.

Secondly, the demonstration's participants reflected changes in the organised workforce in the United States, and particularly the nascent challenge for political influence within the trade unions of service and public sector workers. Unions such as the health workers of NUHHCE (National 1199 as well as the 70,000 strong autonomous Local 1199 in New York), AFSCME, ACTWU, NEA, etc, had consistently been more receptive to questions and issues generally neglected by the older craft-based and industrial unions, such as child care, sexual harassment, and affirmative action. Their ascendent position inside the labour movement (due mainly to the decline of the old craft and industrial unions than any major growth in their own size) provided a more suitable political climate for anti-interventionist efforts that focused on public spending priorities, the racist character of U.S. foreign policy and other issues.

Thirdly, the anti-interventionists demonstrated that, far from being simply a cohort of activists "boring from within" the trade union movement in pursuit of a generally unpopular agenda, anti-interventionism had a substantial base of support among the broader union membership. Of course, it was uncertain how many union members travelled to Washington primarily to protest U.S. intervention in Southern Africa, Central America, or precisely what proportion of the union participants considered them equally worthy of support (although one observer noted that "South Africa was not ignored, but Central America was the dominant concern.") [57] Nevertheless, the demonstration was a success despite the condemnatory statements of Kirkland and other union leaders who for the most part targeted the Central America issue (particularly the "communism" of the Sandinistas and the FMLN) as a means of dissuading unionists from attending the event.

Fourthly, although the demonstration was officially organised to protest U.S. Government foreign policy, the statements of Shanker, Kirkland, and Joyce effectively made the Mobilization a trial of strength between the Cold War and anti-intervention wings of the labour leadership over who could reach and activate the rank and file. Had the union contingent attending the march been confined to the anti-intervention activists, then the Kirkland forces would have claimed a victory. The extent of rank and file participation, however, delivered the victory to the anti-interventionists. Furthermore, the statements of

Kirkland, et. al., brought the issue of official AFL-CIO activities in Central America and Southern Africa to the forefront. Ed Asner, former SAG President, in his address to the Washington crowd, attacked AIFLD: "It is painfully hard to swallow the AFL-CIO's rhetoric on democratic trade unionism," said Asner, "when faced with the shady, truly subversive activities of their American Institute For Free Labor Development and its meddling in the politics of Central America, mirroring the role of the administration, and quite possibly the CIA." The New York Times noted how Asner's comments drew "loud applause." [58]

Fifthly, the banners and slogans of the demonstration repeatedly made the connection between anti-intervention themes and economic issues, and criticised both the multinationals and the U.S. Government. Since 1980 the development of anti-intervention sentiment in the U.S. labour movement had been inseparably tied to traditional trade union concerns such as jobs, wages, and conditions. The April 25th Mobilization again confirmed that the political and economic attacks on organised labour in the 1980's had provided a firm bedrock upon which anti-interventionism had been erected. One trade unionist recorded, "Most of the labor marchers...have borne the brunt of Reagan's economic and social policies: predominantly minority workers at the bottom of the wage scale, public sector workers squeezed by budget cuts, and workers in labor intensive industries who are most vulnerable to foreign competition. Probably very few had ever been to

a peace demonstration before." [59]

All told, the April 25th Mobilization constituted a major political advance for anti-intervention trade unionism and the CA/AIM as a whole. The internal challenge to Cold War unionism had now reached tens of thousands of trade unionists. However the NLC, primarily because of its fear of "red baiting", failed to seize the opportunity to turn strong rank and file sentiment against U.S. intervention into a clear step towards developing a new internationalism for the U.S. labour movement.

Iran-contra and After.

The period of preparation for the April 25th Mobilization coincided with the dramatic opening weeks of the so-called Iran-contra affair which began in November 1986. The 1987 Federal investigations into Lieutenant Colonal Oliver North's project to secure money for the contras by selling arms to Iran disclosed the existence of an elaborate network of private and public individuals and organisations working to sustain the contra's military campaign against the Sandinista government during 1984 and 1985 when Congress decided not to approve military aid.

The enormous impact of the scandal on the Reagan presidency virtually ensured that labour movement involvement in the affair passed without notice in the media. However, inside the headquarters of many unions and in the regional and

local bodies where anti-interventionism had established a voice, the role of PRODEMCA in North's mission to acquire funds and political support for the "Nicaraguan Resistance" was an issue of considerable interest. Doherty, as co-founder of PRODEMCA and on personal terms with the contra leadership, and perhaps Joyce, Shanker, Drozak and Mazur as union leaders identifying with PRODEMCA's objectives, were suspected of having at least some knowledge of North's efforts. PRODEMCA was clearly part of North's contra support network which included, among other neo-conservative and New Right figures and groups, beer capitalist Joseph Coors whose anti-union and racist reputation was known throughout the labour movement. (See Chapter Six)

The House-Senate committee which investigated the affair established that New Right fundraiser and North associate Carl "Spitz" Channel gave between $80-90,000 to PRODEMCA in the Spring of 1986. [60] The money, purportedly raised from private donors, was, according to Channel, to fund a publicity campaign to win the support of "swing vote" House Democrats for the President's $100 million 1986 contra aid proposal. (See Chapter Eight) PRODEMCA's involvement in Congressional lobbying was illegal due to its status as a non-profit tax-exempt organisation. [61] PRODEMCA, embarrassed by the revelation, announced that it returned the money to Channel in March 1987. [62] NLC coordinator Daniel Cantor commented that, "The revelations of ties between Channel, Oliver North, PRODEMCA and AIFLD is only spectacular evidence of what many

unionists have felt in their bones for years." [63]

Another labour movement connection to the North operation was revealed in the part played by Roy Godson, Director of the International Labor Program at Georgetown University. Godson had served as foreign policy advisor to AFL-CIO Presidents Meany and Kirkland, a consultant to the DIA, and as a principal teacher in AIFLD's school for Latin American union leaders at the Meany Center in Maryland. Furthermore, Godson was the principle defender of Cold War unionism in intellectual circles (See Chapter One.) Godson's role in the Iran-contra scandal was described by former National Security Advisor John Poindexter during the House-Senate investigations. Poindexter said on July 20, 1987, that he retained Godson as a special consultant to assist the contra fundraising effort. [65] It was later disclosed that Godson, while working for North and the National Security Council, secured a $100,000 contribution to the contras from the right-wing Heritage Foundation, an organisation widely regarded as a policy "think-tank" for the Reagan Administration. One source commented, "Roy Godson is now emerging as an important figure in the Iran-contra scandal...Godson served as a middle-man in a complex series of financial transactions to provide funds for the rebel war in Nicaragua." [66]

Godson's activities further illuminated the ideological, institutional, as well as personal links between the AFL-CIO's foreign policy establishment and the openly anti-union New

Right. Moreover, in the early 1980s, Godson was also connected to Government intelligence. In 1982 Godson became Director of the National Strategic Information Center, founded in 1962 by the late Director of the CIA, William Casey. Godson was also a paid consultant to the U.S. Information Agency and heavily involved in the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence which in 1982 focused attention on the U.S. Government's domestic intelligence requirements. Godson wrote: "Some (Consortium) participants suggested that the heart of the internal security problem lies less in the activities of extremists...and more with those of leading members of society who, by example, legitimize cooperation with foreign adversaries." [67] The participants included David Jessup (before his AIFLD appointment), Eugenia Kemble, then Albert Shanker's assistant at the AFT, and Penn Kemble the chief spokersperson for PRODEMCA. Also participating were representatives of leading corporations such as Adolph Coors and the Rand Corporation. [68]

The Iran-contra scandal provoked discussion and argument everywhere. The AFL-CIO in Washington, however, remained strangely mute on the issue. Federation headquarters, including Kirkland's office, preferred not to comment. The AFL-CIO News, normally outspoken on international affairs, ignored the matter. However, the AFL-CIO Executive Council met in February and, without reference to the scandal issued a DIA-prepared statement on the contras which constituted a marked shift in Federation policy. The statement declared,

"The...CUS labor federation in Nicaragua has called for a withdrawal of U.S. military assistance to the contras linked to the simultaneous withdrawal of Soviet-Cuban military assistance to the Sandinistas." Moreover, the statement said the AFL-CIO would work with the CUS to promote dialogue between the Sandinistas and the contras. [69]

It appeared doubtful that the change in the Federation's position on contra aid had been determined by a formal shift of position by the CUS. The latter's view of contra aid had always been ambiguous. When asked in Managua the CUS claimed to oppose aid. When in Washington, however, CUS representatives normally deferred to AIFLD's strident pro-contra stance. Rather, the shift in the Federation's position appeared to indicate a tactical retreat by the DIA. With the April 25th Mobilization imminent, the Iran-contra scandal threatening to implicate labour movement figures in the North funding operation, and the Federation's full convention only six months away, the DIA probably anticipated a major defeat on the contra aid issue. It was perhaps realistic to hope that a slight shift in position at this time, attributed to the CUS (who might of course change its mind after the convention), could reduce the numbers travelling to the April 25th demonstration and prevent an unprecedented convention defeat for the DIA which might jeopardise its legitimacy and, in the longer term, its very existence.

Whatever the tactical considerations, Cold War unionism found itself in a defencive position. The impressive rank and file participation in the April 25th Mobilization and the NLC's relative firmness in the face of "red-baiting" helped to confine the DIA to a political bunker. Just how long this defenciveness might last remained to be seen.

Countdown 87: The Campaign Against Contra Aid.

The Iran-contra affair at first appeared to signal the imminent cessation of Congressional aid to the Nicaraguan insurgents, not least because most of the money obtained in the arms deal appeared to have gone astray. North's assistant, Robert Owen, had disclosed that discrepancies existed in the bank accounts of at least one of PRODEMCA's proclaimed democrats, namely UNO leader Adolfo Calero. [70] Indeed, on March 3, 1987, the House introduced a moratorium on $40 million in aid which had been put aside for the contras.

However, the daily television appearances of North during the House-Senate investigations in the Summer of 1987, and the purported outbreak of "Olliemania" among the U.S. public, revived of the pro-contra forces. In Congress, despite the revelations of corruption and incompetence, support for the contras remained fairly firm. [71] Sensing North had charmed Congress and the U.S. public, the Administration began to prepare a request for a massive $270

million contra aid package.

In July 1987 more than a dozen organisations formed "Countdown 87" to fight the impending aid proposal. The organisations extended the church-union partnership achieved during the April 25th mobilization and included the NLC, Coalition For A New Foreign Policy, Nicaragua Network, United Church of Christ, Witness For Peace, Presbyterian Church USA and Catholic Social Justice. In 1985-86 the pro-contra lobby of PRODEMCA and others had targeted the "swing votes" in the House and Senate, apparently to great effect. Countdown 87 not only constituted itself as the anti-interventionist's answer to the pro-contra lobby, it even sought to emulate the methods of its opponents. The Countdown 87 campaign enlisted full-time staff members from union headquarters in Washington and activities were coordinated with professionals working with the church and advocacy groups. [72]

The Countdown 87 campaign embraced a dual strategy of conventional lobbying and grassroots mobilization, a method approved by representatives of the city-based labour committees who met in Washington on April 26, the day after the Mobilization. It was agreed that PRODEMCA's method of targeting selected members of Congress had brought results, but the momentum of the Mobilization should not be dissipated by a purely Congress-orientated strategy which excluded grassroots activism and rank and file involvement. A campaign spokesperson remarked, "We will surely be outspent by right-wing organizations...But we will match their dollars with

millions of letters from mainstream America." [73]

The NLC's coordinators Dyson and Cantor compiled a union membership breakdown in several "swing" Congressional districts thus to initiate pressure from the unions with the most members in any given district. For examples, the UAW targeted Senator Aspin, a Wisconsin Democrat; ACTWU pressured Senator Patterson from South Carolina and the IAM focused on Senator Pickett from Virginia. Moderate Republicans were also targeted; for example, the NEA approached Senators Snowe and Cohen from Maine. [74] In terms of broader public outreach, preliminary reports were positive. As Cantor recorded in a letter to a CWA official, "It appears that the general anti-contra feeling that the public opinion polls reflect is even stronger in the labor movement." [75] By mid-September five of the six largest AFL-CIO unions were lobbying on Capitol Hill against further aid to the contras and local union leaders were active in key congressional districts. [76]

The AFL-CIO Supports The Arias Plan.

As the Reagan Administration struggled to resuscitate support for the contras an independent diplomatic initiative by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica delivered another setback to the pro-contra forces. In early August the presidents of the five Central American countries met in Guatamala city to approve an 11-point peace initiative known as the Arias Plan which required Nicaragua, El Salvador,

Honduras, Guatamala and Costa Rica to lift restrictions on political dissent, press censorship, issue an amnesty to rebels and to hold elections for a Central American parliament. In addition, each country agreed to negotiate a cease-fire and to forbid the use of its territory by guerilla groups seeking to overthrow governments in other countries.

Since peace was now on the agenda the chances of Congress approving $270 million in contra aid seemed remote. At the AFL-CIO's full convention in Miami during late October a DIA resolution was approved which endorsed the Arias Plan and called for the cessation of all military aid to the insurgents in the region, including the contras, and the implementation of democratic reforms. As was the case at Anaheim, behind-the-scenes bargaining occurred over the wording of the resolution; the DIA agreed to oppose contra aid providing this was linked to a call for the withdrawal of Soviet-Cuban aid to the Sandinistas. The NLC preferred unqualified opposition to all types of aid. The resolution that was eventually approved called for a "withdrawal of U.S. military assistance to the contras, as well as the withdrawal of Soviet-Cuban military assistance to the Sandinistas." [77]

The floor debate in Miami was much shorter than the one which occurred two years earlier at Anaheim. Lane Kirkland, who chaired the proceedings, allowed only five speakers of which only one, Sheinkman of ACTWU, spoke against contra aid. The resolution's ambiguous language resulted in two conflicting interpretations of AFL-CIO policy to emerge

following the convention. The pro-contra forces argued that the discontinuation of their support for the contras required a Soviet-Cuban moratorium on weaponry delivered to the Sandinistas. The anti-interventionists, on the other hand, maintained that the two elements in the resolution pertaining to Soviet-Cuban and U.S. aid were quite distinct from each other, and that the AFL-CIO was committed to oppose both forms of aid without conditions. [78]

Conflicting interpretations aside, the convention resolution registered official AFL-CIO opposition to contra aid for the first time. More significant than any change in the language of the Federation's position was, however, the disarray of the Cold War union leaders who supported the DIA's position. PRODEMCA, implicated in North's fundraising effort, had been eclipsed by Countdown 87 to the extent that a wide segment of Congress now began to think of the U.S. labour movement as a force against intervention in Nicaragua. One year earlier the most audible union voices had been firmly in support of contra aid.

In August AIFLD made its first ever public criticism of the contras, stating that, "Despite efforts by leaders of the armed Nicaraguan Resistance to train their forces to observe human rights standards, abuses are continuing...a contra attack...on July 16th left three children and one pregnant woman dead. The deaths were caused by indiscriminate firing of machine guns and grenades into homes." [79] U.S. trade unionists were invited to send protest letters to contra

leader Alfonso Robelo in Miami. [80]

In the period following the AFL-CIO Convention in 1985 AIFLD appeared to actively undermine the Federation's official support for a non-military solution to the Nicaraguan conflict by supporting PRODEMCA's campaign for contra aid and by circulating propaganda which extolled the democratic virtues of the contras. Was it now possible that AIFLD and the Institute's firmest supporters on the Executive Council had reconsidered their position? Were the contras not freedom fighters, after all, but murderers of innocent civilians?

AIFLD's support for the contras appeared to be as firm as ever. While Countdown 87 continued to press Congress to cease all contra aid in full accordance with the official AFL-CIO position, AIFLD and other leading Federation officials followed the lead of the Reagan Administration. This occurred in two important respects. Firstly, Congress between September and December 1987 approved three packages of CIA-administered "non-lethal" aid to the contras as a combined cost of $14.4 million. No official AFL-CIO opposition was registered. Indeed, Donald Slaiman, a key official in the AFL-CIO's Department of Organization and Field Services, commented that, "Neither the (convention) resolution or the Peace Accord (Arias Plan) prohibits non-military aid to insurgents while the details of the accord are being negotiated." [81] This view was refuted by President Arias himself on the eve of his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize: continued funding of the contras, he explicitly warned,

threatened the peace process. [82]

Secondly, AIFLD claimed that endorsement of the Arias Plan did not amount to an acceptance of Sandinista rule. "The Marxist-Leninist regime imposed on Nicaragua by the Sandinistas," said the Institute, "must not be left in place by any peace settlement." [83] AIFLD further maintained that the Sandinistas had reneged on the conditions of the peace plan and intended to use the Arias initiative for tactical purposes. AIFLD submitted fresh charges of Sandinista harassment of the CUS which, said the Institute, contravened the peace plan's directive pertaining to the broadening of political freedoms. This, said AIFLD, was a clear violation of the peace agreement. [84]

It was clear that the DIA and its principal supporters had faithfully followed the Reagan Administration's lead and had used the Arias plan as a means to further attack the Sandinistas. In September 1987 the pro-contra forces launched "Peace and Democracy Watch," a group that claimed it stood for the pursuit of democracy in Central America through the full implementation of the Arias Plan. The group announced "it will take no position on the issue of aid to the Nicaraguan resistance" - although many of its participants and signatories were on record as contra enthusiasts. These included Drozak, Joyce and Shanker from the unions, and Bernard Aronson, Penn Kemble, and Robert Leiken - three of the "gang of four" Democrats instrumental in convincing "swing" Congresspeople to support contra aid in 1985 and 1986. [85]

Bricklayers' leader John Joyce spearheaded the drive to win trade union support for the new group which showed no evidence of being anything more than a successor to the discredited PRODEMCA. Joyce announced that the new formation intended to "coordinate the activities of a number of existing organizations concerned with problems of democracy in Central America, among them...Freedom House, PRODEMCA and members of the AFL-CIO." [86] David Dyson informed Jack Sheinkman that, "With the exception of the AFL-CIO unions, every one of these organizations has an explicit pro-contra position. The whole project is an attempt to scuttle the peace process under the guise of being 'neutral'; in other words, an attempt to do contra work without admitting it." [87]

For the NLC the most worrying development was the decision of William Wynn, leader of the 1.6 million members in the UFCW, to endorse Peace and Democracy Watch. Wynn had endorsed the April 25th Mobilization but now appeared to have changed his stance. The UFCW's international affairs department formally discouraged Wynn from accepting Joyce's invitation, stating that Peace and Democracy Watch "may be an effort to support the Reagan Administration's quest for future contra aid, by showing that El Salvador is in full compliance with the Arias Plan and that Nicaragua is not." [88]

Peace and Democracy Watch organised a much publicized visit to Central America in early November 1987. The central figure of the delegation was Edward Koch, Mayor of New York City, who was accompanied by contra sympathisers Ronald Radosh

and Douglas Payne of Freedom House as well as Joyce himself. Freedom House's contribution to the delegation's briefing papers contained material which explicitly called for military and non-military aid to "The Resistance" and for U.S. assistance to the CUS and other non-military opponents of the Sandinistas. [89] The delegation met with contra leaders in Miami before landing in Managua. [90] Once in Managua, pro-Sandinista mass demonstrations greeted the visitors. Unfortunately for Joyce and the tour's organisers, Koch proved to be an unreliable contra supporter and made press statements which expressed admiration for President Ortega who, said Koch, "deeply wants peace." [91] Nevertheless by January, 1988, Peace and Democracy Watch had reached their verdict: the Arias Plan had not been implemented. And who was responsible? "For us...the burden of blame (falls) most heavily upon the Sandinistas." [92]

Once again several trade union leaders and Federation functionaries had defied AFL-CIO policy. The battle against the Sandinistas, indeed the Cold War itself, was for them far more important than any formal adherence to the views of the AFL-CIO majority. The latest ploy was clear: depict the Sandinistas as the principal violators of the Arias Plan and therefore opposed to peace and democracy. Congress would then respond to this clear threat to national security and resume military aid to the contras.

The argument that the Sandinista government was the chief violator of the peace accords was entirely spurious.

In January 1988 the International Verification and Follow-Up Commission, established by the five Central American presidents to monitor implementation of the accord's provisions, reported that Nicaragua had "taken concrete steps" towards democratization by re-opening La Prensa (no daily newspaper openly sympathetic to the left existed in El Salvador or Guatamala), and had lifted the state of emergency to allow broader political space for the opposition. Furthermore, Nicaragua was considered to be the only one of the five governments in the region to adequately represent opposition leaders on its national reconciliation commission. [93] Moreover, other observers noted how human rights abuses in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatamala which clearly violated the accords had been ignored by the Reagan Administration, the bulk of the U.S. media and, it could be added, the contra supporters in the U.S. labour movement. [94]

Conclusion.

By 1988 the political balance of forces within the U.S. trade union movement had clearly shifted in favour of the anti-interventionists. On the question of contra aid, it was the advocates of Cold War unionism who were now the dissidents. Moreover, the change in the AFL-CIO's position on contra aid was accompanied by a growing anti-intervention trade union presence on Capitol Hill, at the local level in the "swing" Congressional districts and on the streets in the

form of major demonstrations. In contrast, the pro-contra forces in the labour movement tainted by the Iran-contra scandal had resorted to "red-baiting" anti-interventionists and, in the case of Peace and Democracy Watch, had been forced to conceal their blatant pro-contra sympathies behind a perfidious support of the Arias Plan. In complete harmony with the Reagan Administration and most of the media, and despite clear evidence to the contrary, Peace and Democracy Watch and AIFLD attempted to depict the Sandinistas as sole violators of the peace accords in order to convince Congress to recommence military aid to the contras.

As far as Nicaragua was concerned the internal challenge to Cold War unionism, while be no means complete, could be described as a success. In 1980 the AFL-CIO was a vociferous opponent of the Sandinistas in U.S. political circles and in the international labour movement. By 1988, although the DIA and other federation officials continued to fight the Cold War, the U.S. Congress and the international labour movement were both cognizant of a marked change of direction in the U.S. trade union movement over a pivotal foreign policy question.

The contra war and the Congressional struggle over the issue of aid continued until the end of the Reagan period and into the Bush presidency which began in 1989. Nevertheless, the new president did not have the support of the U.S. labour movement for what amounted to the continuation of Reagan's Cold War policies in Central America. Furthemore, the success

of the April 25th Mobilization suggested that the labour movement might oppose U.S.intervention in other regions of the world. All other postwar U.S. presidents had come into office with the knowledge that the U.S. labour movement was a reliable supporter of U.S. foreign policy.

Meanwhile AIFLD's own Cold War projects in Nicaragua and El Salvador faced disaster. As Chapter Nine described, AIFLD's support for Duarte's stillborn reformism and its war on the UNTS had further discredited the Institute in the U.S. labour movement. In Nicaragua, the CUS continued to be a minority voice in the labour movement who, without U.S. Government assistance via the AFL-CIO would in all probability disappear.

Chapter Eleven summarises the developments in the labour movements of Nicaragua, El Salvador and the U.S. from 1988 to mid-1989. In addition, it attempts to evaluate the political significance of the struggle in the U.S. trade union movement over Central America, particularly with regard to the issues discussed in the opening pages of this thesis.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE 1987-1989 PERIOD AND CONCLUSION

[Note: The first part of this chapter was written before the defeat of the Sandinistas in the February 1990 Nicaraguan presidential elections and prior to the FMLN's offensive of November 1989. The changes in Eastern Europe had also for the most part not occurred. The second part of the chapter (which concludes this thesis) was written after these events took place.]

The period between late 1987 until early 1989 did not produce any qualitative changes in the conflict between the anti-interventionists and their Cold War opponents in the U.S. labour movement. The perennial timidity of the NLC (a handful of outspoken members aside) ensured that for the time being the international affairs apparatus would continue to operate as it had done for several decades. However, the DIA and AIFLD's criticism of the contras, and, eventually, the Salvadoran armed forces, suggested that the official apparatus perceived the need to respond somewhat to the concerns of the anti-interventionists, although this appeared to have little impact on the DIA's choice of friends and opponents in the international labour movement.

This chapter provides a condensed account of developments in the labour movement of the U.S., Nicaragua, and El Salvador from 1987 until early 1989. I will then conclude this thesis by returning to the empirical and theoretical tasks stated at the outset and to demonstrate that these stated tasks have indeed been fulfilled.

Nicaragua: War on the Internal Front?

In early 1988 the contras suffered serious political and military setbacks. Non-military leaders Cruz, Robelo, and Calero resigned due either to scandals associated with the Iran-contra affair and personal disillusionment. [1] Thus the CIA's attempt to present the contras as heroic freedom fighters, a strategy assisted by Cold War liberals and trade union figures such as Doherty, Joyce and Shanker had now all but completely collapsed. The counter-revolution had lost its diplomatic wing. What remained was the Somocista-dominated contra army, which had been mauled by a major Sandinista offensive in March, and its sympathisers inside Nicaragua. Meanwhile in Congress attempts to secure military aid to the contras were defeated.

Nicaraguan Unions Realign.

The Reagan Administration now faced two options: accept the presence of the Sandinistas ("losing" Nicaragua) or

develope new methods to fight the regime. It chose the latter. One source predicted, "..we're going to see now an enormous effort to create an internal front opposed to the revolution...(The U.S. Government) can manipulate and establish...political parties, trade unions, youth, professional, women's groups...every social group you can imagine." [2] With the economy in a total shambles the prospects for developing a serious political challenge to the FSLN appeared favourable.

In reality the "internal front" had been in existence since 1979. Trade union formations like the CUS, the remaining capitalists in COSEP and numerous other political and religious formations constituted a visible non-military opposition to the Sandinistas and the revolutionary process. In January 1988 the Sandinistas relaxed restrictions on civil rights and reintroduced the right to strike. The CUS's newspaper Solidaridad could again circulate and the CUS declared that it hoped to affiliate 26 new unions previously denied recognition under the state of emergency. [3]

In February the labour movement realigned itself. Unions to the right of the Sandinista federations (CUS and the "social Christian" CTN) formed a united front with those on the left (the CAUS and the CP-linked CGTi). A strike against conscription and wage controls provoked counter-demonstrations organised by the pro-FSLN unions. [4] By mid-April 1988 the U.S. media claimed that industrial unrest in Nicaragua was higher than at any time since 1979. A strike of construction

workers affiliated to the Nicaraguan Socialist (i.e. Moscow Communist) Party lasted several weeks. In another dispute two opposition union organisers were shot and killed by a Sandinista soldier in a confrontation between CAUS strikers and government troops. [5] The incident shattered claims made by Sandinista sympathisers in the U.S. that no trade unionist had lost their life in an act of government repression since the fall of Somoza. Americas Watch demanded President Ortega comment both on the killings and the reportedly violent FSLN counter-demonstrations directed against anti-Government strikers. [6]

The formation of the new anti-Sandinista labour alliance was a serious political setback for the FSLN who reacted by scornfully referring to the strike leaders as "servile lackeys of the bourgeoisie and American imperialism." [7] A pro-Sandinista union leader made more specific charges: "Members of the U.S. Embassy have been meeting with groups of both the right and the ultra-left in their union offices and in the Embassy." [8] The U.S. Embassy's close relationship to the CUS, a NED and AIFLD funded entity, was common knowledge in Nicaragua. Indeed, a contingent of U.S. postal workers visiting Nicaragua at the time reported, "A member of our delegation ran into a CUS leader and an Embassy employee in a cozy meeting over steaks and expensive drinks at a hotel bar. They identified themselves only reluctantly after one of our interpreters recognised them." [9] However, Sandinista accusations that the CAUS and the CGTi were agents of

imperialism seemed inconsistent with their respective political histories. Both had opposed Somoza and, until now, had critically supported Sandinista direction of the revolution. It seemed highly unlikely that trade union opposition to the Government was the exclusive responsibility of the U.S. Embassy or the bourgeoisie, although what exactly motivated the CAUS and the CGTi to ally with the CUS and the CTN - federations in league with the U.S. Government and Nicaraguan capitalism - remained somewhat unclear.

Economy Worsens

It remained more than sufficiently clear, however, that the Nicaraguan economy at the point of collapse. Workers' living standards in all sectors continued to fall, unemployment had risen to 21%, and, in 1987, Nicaragua spent 46% of its budget on a war which had resulted in $531.5 million in lost production. During the eight-year war $12.3 billion had been lost in economic damage and an estimated 50,000 Nicaraguans had died. [10] Shortages, rampant inflation, the war; these and other factors strained to breaking point the political as well as material resources of the revolution. A June 1988 independent opinion poll revealed that 74% of Managuan adults considered their family's economic situation to have worsened in the previous year; 34% of those asked felt Sandinista management of the economy to be either "bad" or "terrible". [11]

Towards the end of 1988 the Nicaraguan Government announced sweeping austerity measures which included a 60% cut in government investments and a further devaluation of the cordoba to fight an annual inflation rate of 23,000%. Furthermore, FSLN moved decisively to the right when it announced a "programmatic revision" (known as concertacion) which entailed long-term strategic economic arrangements with Nicaraguan capitalism, the end of expropriations, and, in some instances, returning nationalised concerns to their former owners. The pro-Sandinista unions, however, argued that the capitalists could not be trusted. Workers continued to make sacrifices, they said, while the rich decapitalized their enterprises and made money from speculation. Ortega responded by urging workers "to recover their trust in the producers." [12]

The pro-FSLN unions had consistently urged the Government to conduct further expropriations and hand production over to them. By mid-1989 the situation had reached a point where the FSLN leadership's policy of attempting to balance the interests of the capitalists on the one hand and the workers and peasants on the other had reached a critical point. The situation seemed pregnant with at least two clear possibilities: either the anti-Sandinista union alliance (which included the CUS) might advance at the expense of the pro-FSLN unions (or perhaps electorally behind an opposition candidate in the elections scheduled for 1990), or the pro-FSLN unions would themselves need to mobilize behind

demands for greater expropriation of the private producers.

During the first months of the Bush Administration Congress approved a $66 million "humanitarian" aid package to the contras. The worsening Nicaraguan economy, however, encouraged the Administration to persevere with building the internal front. The National Endowment For Democracy (NED), which spent $800,000 in Nicaragua during 1988, was expected to spend $2 million in 1989. [13] Recipients of NED money included La Prensa and the Coordinadora - the anti-Sandinista political opposition which included the CUS and the capitalists in COSEP. [14]

El Salvador: The Rising Tide of Union Repression.

The AFL-CIO's defence of the Salvadoran government's trade union record continued into 1989 despite evidence of growing repression. The Federation's 1987 full convention again approved military aid to the country, operating on the belief - encouraged by AIFLD - that the human and trade union rights situation continued to improve. AIFLD also continued to applaud the results of the land reform at a time others pointed to its severe limitations. [15] In 1987, U.S. aid to the regime amounted to $606 million and exceeded the Salvadoran government's $582 million contribution to its own national budget. A government contributing less to its own budget than it received from the U.S. was apparently unprecedented in the history of U.S. foreign aid. In 1984

Kissinger and the AFL-CIO had recommended that U.S. Government aid should be used to eradicate the economic under-pinnings of the crisis in Central America; in 1987, however, roughly 75% of U.S. aid to El Salvador was spent on the counter-insurgency war and dealing with its repercussions. [16]

AIFLD's defence of the Salvadoran government occasionally reached absurd proportions in 1987. For example, before a Congressional subcommittee in September Doherty announced that, "The Duarte administration has not declared a strike to be illegal...unless it has been called for overtly political purposes." [17] Yet, the disingenuous nature of this claim was made obvious by a statement to the same committee by Cristobal Aleman, a leader of the AIFLD-supported UNOC. Aleman stated, "During President Duarte's administration there have been a total of 155 strikes, of which 3 were declared legal and 152 illegal. The majority of illegal strikes were promoted by the...UNTS." [18] Clearly, Duarte's (and Doherty's) conception of an illegal or political strike was broad enough to account for approximately 98% of work stoppages since the beginning of his presidency!

More disturbing was the way AIFLD and the U.S. Embassy determined the existence of an improved human rights situation in El Salvador. The most recent figures pertaining to death squad activity were measured against the level of atrocities recorded during the genocidal repression of 1980-82. Therefore, when a March 1987 report by the Lawyers Committee For Human Rights disclosed that "the monthly toll of death-

squad style killings is down from hundreds to perhaps a dozen," AIFLD declared that the figures were "encouraging." [19]

Encouraging or not, AIFLD did protest a rash of assassinations, including the April 1987 decapitation by uniformed troops of Antonio de Jesus Hernandez Martinez, leader of the UNTS-affiliated National Association of Agricultural Workers (Asociacion Nacional de Trabajadores Agricultura -ANTA). [20] AIFLD also protested the actions of five armed men who "went on a killing spree" in an agricultural cooperative, killing four, seriously wounding five, and leaving four female teenagers raped. Such acts, said AIFLD, threatened the fragile democracy that existed in El Salvador. [21] Other sources confirmed a deteriorating human and trade union rights situation in El Salvador. UNOC noted the "marked reappearance" of death squad assassinations and disappearances. "Unidentified individuals" had murdered 156 people and the armed forces were responsible for 56 deaths. [22] Figures from church sources were even worse. Politically motivated violence in the first half of 1987 had, they calculated, claimed the lives of 742 people. [23]

At this point the terror directed against trade unionists appeared to be more indiscriminate, especially in the countryside where the UNTS-affiliate, COACES, had made an impact on the formerly pro-Duarte cooperative movement. [24] In the urban sector workers protesting falling living standards conducted major strikes, including the hospital

workers in STISSS. A STISSS-UNTS demonstration on July 8 was fired on by the armed forces, wounding eight people. The following week five more workers were shot and wounded at a UNTS rally. [25] On the eve of a UNTS-sponsored May Day demonstration the UNTS's offices were bombed and on August 5 a death squad threatened to assassinate the entire UNTS leadership. [26]

During this same period the shadow of the death squads extended as far as Los Angeles. Salvadorans (including Marta Alicia Rivera the U.S. representative of ANDES) and CISPES activists suffered death threats and one Salvadoran woman activist was abducted, tortured, and sexually assaulted after leaving a CISPES office. Her assailants accused her of being with the FMLN. [27] In February 1988 the FBI confirmed accusations that it had conducted a two-year surveillance campaign against CISPES and others in the CA/AIM. [28]

Meanwhile, in El Salvador, it was the telecommunications union ASTTEL who endured the most brutal reprisals. The union's conflict with the telecommunications agency ANTEL had continued without respite. In mid-December, 1987, Medardo Cerafina Ayala, a founding member of ASTTEL, was assassinated. On January 13, 1988, ASTTEL activist Victor Manuel Hernandez Vasquez, aged 18, was shot to death close to the doorway of his parents' home. On March 1, ASTTEL member Jose Herbert Guardado was murdered. By the end of May, three more ASTTEL members had been killed by death squads or by uniformed troops. [29]

The limits of "Telegram Internationalism."

The repression unleashed against ASTTEL exposed the limits of the anti-interventionist's "telegram internationalism." In its first year of operation the Salvadoran Labor Defense Network had forwarded more than 1,000 telegrams from U.S. trade unionists demanding the release of 31 union activists detained by the security forces. [30] The Network had, according to one UNTS leader, proven its effectiveness in securing the release "of many union brothers and sisters" from detention in Salvadoran prisons. [31] Yet the letters and telegrams campaign of the ASTTEL Support Project had been unable to prevent the murder of six ASTTEL members. Furthermore, Teamsters Local 111 in New York City and CWA Locals 9415 in Oakland, California, and 7901 in Oregon had formed sister union ties with ASTTEL, and international support for ASTTEL continued to advance. Even New York City's tabloids showed interest in the union's plight. [32] For two years the campaign appeared to provide some protection to ASTTEL. Just days before the first of the six assassinations, the ASTTEL Support Project stated, "When friend and foe alike know the international labor community is watching, it makes a difference. The oligarchy's death squads cannot stand the light of day." [33] The events which followed brutally refuted such a claim.

AIFLD: Accomplices to Repression?

The ASTTEL Support Project was convinced that the AFL-CIO's failure to officially recognise ASTTEL had lessened the survival chances of members of the union singled out for assassination. [34] UNOC had certainly avoided the degree of repression suffered by the UNTS, although UNOC had also avoided political or industrial confrontation with the government and the armed forces. The ASTTEL murders, however, exposed AIFLD to a more serious charge. Anti-interventionists had repeatedly warned that the branding of union federations "communist" or "subversive" threatened the lives of individuals belonging to those organisations. AIFLD had repeatedly described the UNTS and ASTTEL as FMLN-controlled and had made a clear distinction between what was, in their view, legitimate and illegitimate union demands and practices. Even UNTS-conducted strikes over pay and conditions were considered by AIFLD to be FMLN-orchestrated acts of destabilization. Ironically, this view of the UNTS was largely dispelled by the Salvadoran Ambassador to the U.S., Ernesto Rivas-Gallont in a letter to the Washington Post. The UNTS's freedom to operate, he said, could be measured by the fact that "fully 77% of the collective bargaining agreements registered by the (Salvadoran) labor ministry (in 1987) were between employers and UNTS affiliates." [35] AIFLD was forced to concede that, "Even the guerilla-controlled unions undertake legitimate union activities from time to time." [36]

There can be little doubt that AIFLD, in collusion with the U.S. Embassy and the Salvadoran government, actively assisted in creating the type of atmosphere of persecution upon which the death-squads had been known to thrive. The tide of criticism against AIFLD had, however, reached new levels even before the atrocities against ASTTEL. An October 1987 report sponsored by union locals in the SEIU, AFSCME and the NUHHCE concluded that AIFLD's policy of building parallel unions to divide and destroy the UNTS had turned the Institute into an agent of repression. The AFL-CIO, therefore, had allowed itself to be "a direct instrument of U.S. foreign policy in El Salvador." [37]

A more widely publicised attack on AIFLD came from the internationally recognised human rights group Americas Watch. In a March 1988 report, AW broke its own precedent by evaluating the impact of AIFLD on the overall political climate in El Salvador. The formation of parallel unions, and recurrent evidence pointing to the misuse of U.S. Government funds by AIFLD and the unions close to the Institute, necessitated an immediate Congressional inquiry. [38]

AIFLD and the DIA, in a 78-page response, took issue with AW's description of the UNTS as "more militant" than the UNOC and with AW's failure to cite evidence of FMLN atrocities against democratic trade unionists or the FMLN's penetration of the UNTS. Arrests and detentions made by the Salvadoran authorities were, they said, not "primarily motivated by the desire to stifle union activity (but were mainly) to stamp out

a guerilla insurrection." [39] Moreover, the AFL-CIO could not support ASTTEL because it were party to a "strategy of revolutionary violence." [40]

AW later accused AIFLD of deliberately suppressing evidence of state or state-sponsored repression against the unions it claimed to support. For example, AW claimed that AIFLD had remained silent when a leader of the construction workers' federation, FESINCONSTRANS, was murdered. [41] Jeanne Kirkpatrick added her voice to AIFLD's defence, attacking AW in three major newspapers. There was, she said, "no factual evidence" presented against the Salvadoran armed forces and AW demonstrated "no understanding of the FMLN's established strategy of infiltrating and co-opting selected labour organizations." Kirkpatrick emphasised, "Neither the AFL-CIO...nor the Department of State believes the charges have substance." [42] As the paper war between AIFLD and Americas Watch progressed, Salvadoran union activists continued to be murdered. Two nurses, members of STISSS, were killed when their ambulance was machine-gunned on December 17, 1987. On March 11, 1988, STISSS member Francisco Climaco disappeared. His tortured body was discovered three days later "covered with cigarette burns, wrists and ankles bound and eyes gouged out." [43]

The overall human rights situation in El Salvador continued to grow worse. In September 1988 AW reported an increase in assassinations conducted by the armed forces, the death-squads and the FMLN. The guerillas had killed elected

Christian Democrat and ARENA officials as well as suspected collaborators with the armed forces, and caused death to civilians due to the use of land mines and car bombs. [44] In October 1988 Amnesty International declared that right wing death squads had abducted, tortured and executed hundreds of Salvadorans in the preceding eighteen months, often beheading their victims to spread terror. [44]

The Collapse of the Duarte Presidency: UNOC-UNTS Dialogue.

The growing repression coincided with the electoral defeat of the Christian Democrats. In March 1988 the right-wing ARENA party won overall control of the National Assembly and scored large victories at local government level. The UNTS abstained from the elections and later presented its analysis of the poll figures: Of all the eligible voters (3.1 million) only 68% were registered (2.1 million), and less than half of these (970,000) cast votes. Therefore, claimed the UNTS, only 15% of eligible voters supported ARENA. [46] The U.S. Embassy applauded the elections and the Department of State referred to the "growing maturity" of ARENA, a sign that the U.S. Government was concerned that in order to work openly with the party associated with the death-squads it was necessary to announce that ARENA had in recent years become a more sensitive to human rights concerns. [47]

Shortly after the March elections it was disclosed that Duarte was suffering from terminal cancer. With the Christian

Democrats already engulfed in charges of corruption and ineptitude, an ARENA victory in the presidential elections in April 1989 appeared inevitable. In September 1988 UNOC entered into a dialogue with leaders of the UNTS to discuss possible joint actions and to promote a negotiated end to the war. [48] In January the FMLN had stated that it was prepared to participate in the elections providing they were delayed for six months so that measures could be taken to protect the safety of candidates and voters. [49] ARENA, in control of the National Assembly and favorites to win the presidency, rejected the proposal. On February 10 the UNOC, UNTS and two smaller federations, the public sector workers in AGEPYM and the CLAT-affiliated CTS, issued a joint declaration which stated that "the proposal of the FMLN contains fundamental elements for achieving peace." [50]

On February 23, 1989, the AFL-CIO Executive Council urged the U.S. Congress to cease all military aid to El Salvador. The E.C. noted that, "Elements of the security forces have engaged in assassination, abduction and torture, including trade union victims." The FMLN, too, had "assassinated mayors and trade unionists, forced recruitment into guerilla-backed trade unions, and undertaken economic sabotage." Despite the E.C.'s harsh criticism of the FMLN, it expressed support for "the postponement if necessary" of the elections as a condition for a negotiated peace. [51]

This significant shift in policy could be attributed to the cumulative affect of two major factors. Firstly, the

sheer weight of evidence of human rights violations by the Salvadoran military made continued aid to the regime indefencible, notwithstanding AIFLD's attempts to draw a line of distinction between the "government" - which was reformist and deserved aid - and the "military" which harboured renegade reactionaries aligned with ARENA. Secondly, the UNOC, once protected by their alliance with the Christian Democrats, now faced the spectre of ARENA's declaration of "total war" on subversion. The 1980-83 repression had claimed the lives of many unionists associated with AIFLD. (See Chapter Two) If ARENA's candidate, Alfredo Cristiani, won the election both UNOC and the UNTS would become likely targets for a new wave of attacks on workers' organisations. The actual or threatened cessation of U.S. military aid to Cristiani might prevent the repression occurring. AIFLD responded to the UNOC-UNTS dialogue and joint declaration by calling on the UNTS to break with the FMLN. Despite the talks dialogue, however, the federations each staged their own demonstrations in February 1989 following the UNTS's claim that it could not support UNOC's endorsement of the Christian Democrat's presidential candidate Fidel Chavez.

ARENA's Victory: "Total War."

ARENA decisively won the March 1989 elections. Cristiani secured 53% of the vote, the Christian Democrats won 37%, and the Democratic Convergence - the party of FDR

figures Ruben and Zamora - won just 3.2%. However, mass non-registration (700,000) added to the decision of approximately 50% of those registered not to vote (900,000) brought into question the true extent of ARENA's popularity. The FMLN claimed that wide sections of the population had heeded its call for a boycott of the elections, a demand echoed by the UNTS.

By mid-1989 El Salvador appeared to be on the precipice of complete social breakdown. The FMLN had made several successful strikes against the armed forces, and its "urban commandoes" were active in San Salvador itself. The armed forces, meanwhile, declared "Total War" on communism and subversion. The UNTS now focused on developing "alternative power" in the working class neighborhoods and the FMLN's Radio Venceremos urged the people to prepare for insurrection. The situation of dual power which prevailed in June 1989, however, showed few signs of being quickly resolved by a decisive strike by the regime or it opponents.

U.S. Labour: Sister-unions and Caucuses.

Contrary to widespread predictions throughout the 1980s, El Salvador did not become another Vietnam, nor did Nicaragua become another Chile or Grenada. By mid-1989 a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua appeared less likely than it did in 1984-85. The political cost to the Bush Administration of a large scale employment of U.S. troops in Nicaragua or El Salvador was

perhaps greater than ever. As fears of a direct U.S. intervention receded, so did the anti-intervention movement.

In the U.S. trade unions the activities of the city-based committees somewhat decreased. However, significant progress was made inside individual unions. For example, the Postal Workers For Peace was formed by members of both the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU). These unions had passed anti-intervention resolutions at their 1984 conventions and NALC President Vincent Sombrotto eventually joined the NLC. The group visited Central America in 1987 and again in 1988 where it forged links with the Salvadoran postal workers' union SUCEPES, and the Nicaraguan telecommunication workers' union, TELCOR. [52]

In the CWA, one source noted how, "A generation of former civil rights and anti-war activists, now in their thirties and forties, have become local officers, union activists and staff members. They have been key supporters of the anti-intervention work in labor.." [53] Some CWA locals had formed sister union ties with ASTTEL. Support for AIFLD in the union, however, continued to hamper progress, as did CWA President Bahr's inconsistent attitude towards the NLC. [54]

The hospital workers' union NUHHCE 1199, which had adopted a clear anti-contra position in 1983, continued to develop ties with Central American unions. In 1984, 1199's Puerto Rico district established relations with the pro-Sandinista health workers union, FETSALUD. In April 1987

an 1199 delegation to Nicaragua established sister union relations with FETSALUD Region II, covering the central Pacific coast. Medical supplies valued at $13,000 were transported to Nicaragua in 1987. [55]

The 1.6 million-member NEA continued its relationship with the Salvadoran teachers union ANDES. The "Peace and Justice Caucus" - a quasi-official vehicle for anti-intervention and international work - had by the Spring of 1988 enrolled 1100 members and seemed poised to establish regional chapters to expand its work. [56]

In the other main teachers' union, Albert Shanker's AFT, the struggle over AFL-CIO foreign policy continued into 1989. At its 1988 convention a resolution calling for the AFT to "halt all financial and professional support for AIFLD" was reportedly quashed by the convention's resolutions committee. Shanker, appointed chair of the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Committee following the retirement of ILA president Teddy Gleason in late 1987, continued to direct the union by virtue of his powerful base in the huge New York Local 2. The California Federation of Teachers continued to challenge Shanker's Cold War positions and by mid-1988 at least ten AFT locals organised a National Educators Committee on Central America to build material and political support for teachers unions in Central America. [57]

CONCLUSION

It was stated at the outset that the main empirical tasks of this thesis were threefold. Firstly, it has sought to demonstrate the impact the AFL-CIO's international policy has had on Nicaragua and El Salvador. Secondly, this thesis has tried to show how the practice of Cold War unionism advanced the neo-liberal economic agenda of the Reagan-Bush Administrations and the U.S. multinationals. Thirdly, it has attempted to elucidate the internal and external challenges to the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism and to document the development of a nascent alternative internationalism for the U.S. labour movement.

The broader implications as well as the theoretical objectives of this thesis were located in the context of two ongoing discussions. These were, firstly, the present crisis of U.S. trade unionism and, secondly, the growing debate on trade union internationalism and the role of international trade union bodies. Regarding the former discussion, this thesis has sought to demonstrate how the international activities of U.S. labour can have an independent bearing on the crisis of U.S. trade unionism, a factor often completely ignored by both liberal and radical commentators. Regarding the discussion on international trade unionism, and

particularly the concern to advance the theory and practice of a post-Cold War "New Internationalism," I maintained that perhaps too much regard had been payed to the behaviour of international capital and particularly the multinationals. In so doing, these discussions have neglected to fully appraise the significance of what I termed the "political restructuring" of state-labour political relationships that emerged in the advanced capitalist countries following the demise of the postwar Keynesian accommodation. The foreign policy conflict in U.S. labour, and the cautious and preliminary steps taken towards developing a new internationalism for U.S. trade unions, emerged mainly as a result of the new adversarial relationship between the U.S. Government and organised labour. This is not to say that the behaviour of the multinationals was an unimportant feature in this process. But the penetration of so-called developing countries by U.S. capital is hardly a new phenomenon, and during the Keynesian accomodation U.S. labour generally encouraged U.S. investment abroad. In the 1980s the impulse towards a new internationalism emerged largely because the Reagan-Bush administrations launched a series of severe attacks on organised labour.

These empirical and theoretical objectives, I would argue, have for the most part been met. It remains necessary to conclude with a short discussion on each of them. I will begin with the empirical tasks, followed by a discussion of the stated theoretical questions which consider the broader

implications of this subject.

AIFLD in Nicaragua and El Salvador: The Price of "Democratic Internationalism."

In Chapter One of this thesis I criticised certain aspects of the trade union imperialism approach to the subject of the AFL-CIO's intervention in other countries. In particular, I argued that this viewpoint tended to exaggerate the impact of the AFL-CIO's interventions by understating the contributions of other actors. The role of AIFLD in Nicaragua and El Salvador, I would argue, generally supports this view. The splits in the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan working class and labour movements were not created by AIFLD, the DIA, or Lane Kirkland. The unions officially supported by the AFL-CIO espoused a conservative ideology which envisaged the emergence of a society characterised by capitalist economic growth, political pluralism and class harmony. In Chapter One I discussed how this ideology, strong in some instances, weaker in others, has been a distinct feature of working class politics in Latin America in the postwar period. In Nicaragua the Somoza dictatorship and weak capitalist development rendered this strain of trade unionism considerably less robust than was the case, say, in oil-rich Venezuela. However, the declared protagonists of liberal capitalist development did exist in the form of the so-termed anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, represented presently by Dona Violeta Chamorro.

True to its ideology, CUS never strayed from the political leadership provided by this section of the Nicaraguan elite - even if AIFLD did pay many of the bills along the way. Somewhat ironically, Nicaragua has now (1990) arrived at the destination mapped out for it by the AFL-CIO's international policy makers decades ago, although the landmarks along the way - such as guerilla war, popular insurrection and armed counter-revolution - stand in sharp contrast to the unhurried political and economic liberalisation they envisaged and propagated.

It is not possible to accurately determine how visible and significant moderate trade unionism would have been had AIFLD's considerable financial and political support not been available. Carew's research has revealed that, in the case of early postwar Europe, the AFL's financial assistance was "sufficient to grease the wheels of anti-communist labor group activity." [58] It is reasonable to argue that, in the case of Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1980s, AIFLD's (i.e. mainly U.S. Government) funding was of even greater significance - so much so that it not only greased the wheels but also fueled the engine of moderate trade unionism.

The U.S. Left and left-liberals have consistently maintained that, due to the volume of U.S. aid, the Salvadoran economy is "artifical" in the sense that the U.S. Government acts as a life-support machine to a country suffering from terminal dependency. With Chamorro scheduled to receive U.S. aid, the same will probably be said of Nicaragua. Implicit

in the trade union imperialism treatments is the view that labour organisations who receive money and political support from the U.S. Government and the AFL-CIO are similarly artificial, either that or their political presence is hugely inflated by the availability of considerable external assistance. In one sense this is true; indeed, I have argued to this extent above. However, there was nothing in the ideology of the CUS and UNOC which regarded this funding to be antithetical to their vision of legitimate trade unionism, just as AIFLD had no compunction about joining forces with U.S. business, the Department of State and, perhaps, the CIA. In fact, in all of these cases the receipt of such funding was in one respect an expression of their ideology: the U.S. was viewed as a progressive force in the region, defending Nicaragua and El Salvador from sovietization and the worst excesses of the right.

I stated at the outset that I intended to demonstrate how the AFL-CIO had made an important impression on the conflict in Nicaragua and El Salvador and how these countries provided an opportunity to view the AFL-CIO's activities in two contrasting political contexts. In so doing, I showed how the official organs of the Federation spent and distributed large sums of State Department and NED money in the pursuit of objectives that were shared by a right-wing Administration in Washington. I also exposed the distance between the stated aims of the AFL-CIO's "democratic internationalism" - reforms, democracy and class-harmony - and what frequently transpired,

namely persecution, murder, and undemocratic and manipulative practices.

The search for reforms is a legitimate and profoundly basic trade union exercise, and in El Salvador the need for reforms was and remains pressingly urgent. Ostensibly the objectives of AIFLD - land distribution, democratic rights, the creation of a stable judicial system, collective bargaining and worker protection - are also laudable. This, however, is not the main question. If the experience of El Salvador in the last sixty years is any reliable guide then serious reforms can not be achieved by the methods condoned by the Institute and the AFL-CIO. The peasants' union UCS, for example, pressed for land reform and many of its members died as a result. In 1984 the UPD, commanding mass support for its stance, entered into a "social pact" with the Christian Democrats which rapidly unravelled once Duarte was elected and demonstrated his inability to deliver on his promises for meaningful change. This does not mean, however, that AIFLD or the AFL-CIO had no alternative but to extend uncritical support for the armed struggle waged by the FMLN. The armed struggle intensified in 1981 as the possibility of peaceful change expired. In 1980 the revolutionary movement failed to take power and ran into a wall of repression. As discussed in Chapter Two, the lack of a clear strategy for taking power was of central significance, although the intervention of AIFLD and the aggressive promotion by the U.S. Embassy of land reform proposals was also a very important

factor in turning the tide against the Left. Whatever illusions remained at that juncture regarding the possibility of reforms, these should have been dispelled during the bloody course of the last decade. Yet AIFLD continued to promote a brand of reformism - from a safe distance - when the history of such a policy has been constantly punctuated by the murder and disappearance of its adherents.

In 1980, AIFLD and the AFL-CIO's only other alternative was to throw their political weight behind the popular movement. This, of course, was never going to occur for reasons that should by now be more than clear. Mass mobilisations, general strikes and appeals to the lower ranks of the armed forces - these forms of struggle are presumably permissible against a Honecker, Jarulzelski or a Ceausescu, but not against a Duarte, a Cristiani or even a Somoza. It is here that the AFL-CIO's claim to hold equal portions of contempt for the dictators of the left and of the right - the "Single Standard on Dictatorships" - is again found to be spurious. Militant methods can be used against communist dictators but not against the dictators of the right who murder anyone who fights for the most basic reforms.

The most distinct feature of the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism has been its consistent and unbending opposition to the state-sponsored trade unionism in the Eastern bloc and Cuba. Had the AFL-CIO agreed to establish relations with these unions - as some in the ICFTU had wished - then, it is argued, this would have helped to legitimise Stalinist regimes

and undermine any internal resistance to them. This is a political position with which many trade unionists would presumably wholeheartedly concur. However, the opposition to Stalinism conceals a broader opposition to an alternative socialist project. Since the late 1920s the two main camps in international labour have subscribed either to Stalinism on the one hand or reformism on the other. For most of the postwar period the weakness of a working class politics which opposed both Stalinism and capitalism to some extent precluded any clear exposure of the AFL-CIO's blanket hostility to all expressions of socialism. This opposition was clear before the consolidation of Stalinist influence over international communism both in the Federation's dealings with socialist opponents domestically and internationally. It was also revealed somewhat in the postwar purge of socialists in the U.S. labour movement who were not connected to the CPUSA and frequently opposed the CPUSA's Stalinist methods and ideology. [59]

In Latin America AIFLD's opposition to democratically elected left reformist governments further demonstrated the elastic nature of the AFL-CIO leaders' conception of communism. [60] AIFLD's intervention in Nicaragua also revealed that the Cold War unionists, while opposed to a revolutionary transformation instigated by the Left, were nevertheless prepared to endorse an armed counter-revolution from the Right. AIFLD loudly protested Sandinista harassment of trade unionists, although relatively minor infringements

were made to sound like heinous crimes. Cold War ideology made it permissible for AIFLD to advance the cause of the brutal, reactionary and, needless to say, undemocratic contras for the sake of the greater good - the war against communism. Moreover, in the U.S. the Institute worked with notorious anti-union businessmen and politicians to get Congress to provide military aid to an army that raped, murdered and mutilated in truly numbing proportions. The contras had killed Sandinista teenagers who had volunteered to vaccinate campesino children against measles and polio. The contras told the villagers that the Sandinistas were injecting their infants with communism. AIFLD remained silent despite these appalling atrocities. [61]

A further serious charge against AIFLD and the DIA is that they did not tell the truth to Congressional committees, to the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, or to the union members and U.S. citizens who read their contributions to the AFL-CIO News and mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. The evidence presented above, I would argue, makes clear the fact that AIFLD attempted to mislead everyone as to the direction of Salvadoran society by denying or dismissing the extent of trade union repression. While the AFL-CIO had set conditions on its support for military aid to El Salvador, AIFLD strained every nerve to give the broad impression that many of those conditions had been met when the evidence suggested otherwise. AIFLD's attack on the UNTS also contributed to the atmosphere of political persecution which

resulted in the assassination of UNTS militants and, perhaps, to the murders of unionists active in the federation favoured by AIFLD. Meanwhile the Sandinistas were described in the most reprehensible terms even though their record in the area of human rights was immeasurably better than that of El Salvador.

In sum, the AFL-CIO's impact on the political situation El Salvador and Nicaragua has been very significant. True to its record in Latin America, AIFLD and the DIA in Nicaragua used all available means - including, of course, millions of State Department dollars - to destabilize and overthrow a Left government. Also consistent with past practice, in El Salvador AIFLD and the DIA helped sustain a repressive right-wing regime. They faithfully echoed Administration propaganda regarding the purported achievements of a "fledgling democracy;" they "red-baited" labour movement critics of U.S. policy towards that country, and, most significantly, they attempted to manage and contain the reform agenda of a section of the labour movement.

Regarding Nicaragua, in the end it was not a military coup or the U.S. marines that ousted the Sandinistas, but the Nicaraguan people in a general election. Defenders of the U.S. Government's policy toward Nicaragua, including AIFLD and the DIA, will view this "democratic" outcome as indicative of a new phase in U.S. foreign policy. It will be claimed that the years of expediential support for the autocratic right have now passed, replaced by a principled support for the

democratic revolution. And yet, the final electoral drama in Nicaragua aside, the methods and objectives of U.S foreign policy towards recalcitrant regimes in Latin America remain largely unchanged. In this sense, there remains little to distinguish the demise of the Sandinistas in 1990 from that of Jagan in Guyana, Goulart in Brazil, Bosch in the Dominican Republic, Allende in Chile and Bishop in Grenada.

Official bodies of the U.S. labour movement made a distinct contribution in all of these cases of destabilization. This thesis has shown that the AFL-CIO was also a significant actor in the destabilization and eventual collapse of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. The unions it supported in Nicaragua were, and remain, politically wedded to the counter-revolutionary project of the formerly anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, which, after 1979, forged a political-military alliance with exiled Somocistas. AIFLD and the DIA helped secure military aid to the contras when they charged the Sandinistas with the horrible persecution of the "free and democratic" trade unions.

In El Salvador the official AFL-CIO, through AIFLD and the DIA, offered a vision of liberal pluralism, economic growth, and political space for the labour movement. After 25 of AIFLD's active involvement in that country there are few signs that these objectives can be realised. Meanwhile, the killings continue.

AFL-CIO Foreign Policy: In the Service of Neo-Liberalism.

I have shown throughout this thesis that the AFL-CIO's support for U.S. Government policy in Central America also helped advance and legitimise the Reagan Administration's neo-liberal recipes for the region. The broad objectives of the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism in El Salvador and Nicaragua put considerable political and material resourses behind a struggle to defeat the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran left: both of whom, at least until 1988, were categorically opposed to the neo-liberal formulas protagonised by the U.S. Government and the IMF. However, as I have also shown in the case of El Salvador, even the AFL-CIO-supported unions committed to a moderate reformism eventually clashed with the political as well as economic expressions of this neo-liberal agenda. The Christian Democrats were elected in 1984 largely as a result Duarte's commitment to improve the economic and political circumstances of workers and their organizations. Duarte, activating Washington and IMF-encouraged neo-liberal policies to revive the Salvadoran economy, instead presided over a marked deterioration in workers' living standards and branded as "subversive" all efforts to hold the Christian Democrats to their election commitments. (See Chapters Five and Nine).

At this point the AFL-CIO could have put its considerable weight behind labour movement resistence to Duarte's economic agenda. The AFL-CIO might have even led such a resistence.

However, this did not occur because a broad-based movement towards reform might well have toppled the Duarte government and thus opened the door to the Left, especially the FMLN. For the Cold War unionists this was too grave a risk. Ideology aside, there remained the issue of funding. Had the AFL-CIO broke from Duarte, the U.S. Department of State would have almost certainly suspended its multi-million dollar funding of AIFLD. Therefore the AFL-CIO's ties to Reaganite neo-liberalism were both material and ideological, and they also reflected the demise of moderate reformism in El Salvador.

It would be mistaken to conclude, however, that the AFL-CIO's international affairs establishment preferred to support free market neo-liberalism. As discussed in Chapter Four, AIFLD and the DIA tried to impress upon the Kissinger Commission the need for the U.S. Government to support a redistributive "basic needs" economic policy in Central America. The Kissinger Report stated its intention to pursue such a policy, although the main economic proposals reflected the administration's free market leanings. In the end, the free-market thrust of the Kissinger Report, which also endorsed the free-trade program known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative, stood in clear contradiction to the "fair-trade" neo-protectionism of the AFL-CIO's lobbyists on Capitol Hill. Moreover, even when it became clear that the Department of State had blatantly ignored AIFLD's "basic needs" approach to the economic crisis in Central America (CADO), neither AIFLD

or, for that matter, the AFL-CIO's Executive Council, withdrew their support for the Administration's Central America policy. In the end, the AFL-CIO supported the Cold War and anti-Left objectives of U.S. Government policy even though this also carried with it a commitment to a neo-liberal economic agenda which clearly harmed organised workers in the U.S. Therefore while union locals across the U.S. throughout the 1980s fought (often in vain) to halt plant closures and "runaway shops," the AFL-CIO's foreign policy establishment was lending its authority to proposals which threatened to increase the flight of jobs away from the U.S.

The garment workers' (ILGWU) President Jay Mazur, bricklayers' leader John Joyce and several AIFLD and DIA personnel witnessed the inauguration of Chamorro in Managua. Mazur commented, "Nicaragua appears to be on the road to democracy and labor played a key role in that transition." [62] But it is a transition that also spells problems for U.S. workers - and especially in industries such as garments and textiles. The AFL-CIO, in one sense, helped pull Nicaragua out of the Soviet-Cuban frying pan into the neo-liberal fire stoked by the IMF. It will be interesting to see how Mazur will react when the UNO government sets in motion its plan to establish a free trade zone to export semi-finished products to the U.S. Manufacturers will be invited to leave the U.S. and to relocate in Nicaragua in order to take advantage of low wage rates and tax incentives.

The experience of the 1980s appeared to support the notion that the structural position of sections of the U.S. working class vis-a'-vis the world economy has been significantly altered. As discussed in both the Introduction and in Chapter One, the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism was constructed on firm economic, political, and ideological foundations. The preponderant strength of the U.S. economy and the postwar global expansion cemented the "social accord" between U.S. labour, capital and the state. Trade union advances secured during the so-called "militant period" of 1934-47 were officially regarded as irreversable, especially following the purge of labour movement radicals in the late 1940s. The AFL-CIO supported the global activity of U.S. capital because it regarded this to be unambiguously beneficial both to the overall health of the U.S. economy and to U.S. workers.

By 1980 the Keynesian accomodation of the previous period had clearly passed. The neo-liberal domestic economic agenda of the Reagan Administration extended to the international arena. The AFL-CIO maintained that this aggressive neo-liberalism threatened trade-impacted domestic industries and undermined the jobs and living standards of U.S. workers. As the 1980s progressed the Federation began to criticise U.S. multinationals for relocating to low-wage countries and for the level of exploitation of third world workers. The AFL-CIO's enthusiasm for the capitalist industrialization of the third world and free trade, clearly in evidence during the

1950s and 1960s, had now vanished.

What had not vanished, however, was the practice of actively promoting gradualist and moderate trade unionism, particularly in the so-called developing countries. The policy of implacable opposition to the Left, pro-Moscow or otherwise, also continued. Therefore while AFL-CIO economists and trade lobbyists argued against Reagan-Bush domestic and international economic policies, the AFL-CIO's official international affairs functionaries and some union leaders allied themselves with the the Administrations' Cold War political agenda in Nicaragua and El Salvador. In so doing, the AFL-CIO went on record and performed active duty in the service of neo-liberal development policy that harmed U.S. workers as well as their third-world counterparts.

Broader Issues, Implications, and Theoretical Concerns.

1. The Crisis of the U.S. Labour Movement.

I remarked at the outset that both liberal and radical observers of the U.S. labour movement have only recently begun to consider the changes in the world economy and the serious implications these changes hold for organised labour. I noted that these commentators, having taken this step, have so far said little regarding an appropriate international policy for U.S. labour and have generally paid only minimal attention to the role presently performed by the official AFL-CIO in its international work. For liberal commentators this neglect has

been virtually total. Radicals have bemoaned the AFL-CIO's Cold War unionism, but have not deemed it necessary to study it in depth. They have, moreover, offered only vague prescriptions which refer to the need for more international solidarity.

Two problems have emerged from this state of affairs. Firstly, scholars have as yet failed to fully comprehend the degree to which the active pursuit of Cold War unionism has had an independent bearing on the present crisis of U.S. labour. Secondly, this failure or blind spot has contributed to the extremely limited level of attention that has been paid to the question of a viable and vibrant alternative internationalism for U.S. trade unions.

This thesis has shown how Cold War unionism has contributed to the present crisis of U.S. labour in several ways. Most obviously, it has reinforced the position of a conservative U.S. administration committed to an anti-union political and economic agenda in the domestic arena. As this thesis has documented, the AFL-CIO's official positions on El Salvador and Nicaragua lent tacit and often explicit support for U.S. Government foreign policy. In part because of the special role of the U.S. in international affairs, the extent to which an Administration's foreign policy is perceived to be a success or a failure can have a clear impact on the electoral prospects of a President and his political party. In plain language, the AFL-CIO expressed concern regarding Reagan's handling of the economy, but was more than pleased

that the President was "standing up to Communism" in the so-called backyard. This can only have assisted the re-election of the Republicans in 1984 and 1988 and, perhaps just as important, provided further impetus to the shift to the right in the Democratic Party - a process the AFL-CIO helped inaugurate in the early 1970s. (See Chapters Four and Six)

Cold War unionism further contributed to the crisis of U.S. labour in that it directly and indirectly impeded the challenge to Reagan's domestic as well as foreign policy agenda. As documented in this thesis, a broad opposition movement developed in the U.S. committed to resist U.S. intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Many union leaders, local officials, and thousands of trade union activists supported and became a part of this movement, and a significant portion of the latter made it their top political priority. Importantly, the movement against U.S. intervention also forcefully articulated the connection between Reagan's pro-business agenda at home and the U.S. Government's military agenda abroad. It pointed to cuts in social programs, runaway shops and plant closures as inseparable features or byproducts of an interventionist policy designed to make Central America safe for U.S. multinationals. The AFL-CIO's Cold War functionaries did as much as they could to derail and discredit this movement. As has been demonstrated throughout the course of this work, several union leaders vacillated under the pressure of

Kirkland and the Cold Warriors. Other leaders and lower officials who openly sympathised with anti-interventionism were often subjected to attacks and accusations not that dissimilar to those aimed against trade unionists during the McCarthy period. Therefore official endorsements that would have strengthened and invigorated these efforts were either not forthcoming or offered begrudgingly and without the necessary resources to take them forward.

Perhaps the most important contribution Cold War unionism has made to the crisis of U.S. labour lies in its active and implacable opposition to militant, class-struggle unionism throughout the world. This thesis has documented AIFLD's considerable impact on working class politics in El Salvador and Nicaragua. This, I hope, should at this point require no further elaboration. AIFLD contributed to the downfall of the Sandinistas and to the containment and, the evidence suggests, repression of the Left in El Salvador. In so doing AIFLD helped defeat or weaken the very forces that another section of the U.S. labour movement had come to view as its allies. This, consequently, further stunted the development of a dissident movement in U.S. labour which had sought to generate some grass-roots resistance to the Reagan Administration's anti-union and pro-business agenda. As I suggested at the start, the extent to which U.S. labour assists or obstructs working class movements in other countries must be viewed as a factor that shapes working class politics in the U.S. Failure to consider the impact of U.S. labour's international

activities must therefore appreciably distort any evaluation of the present crisis of U.S. labour. Furthermore, it has also retarded discussion on the issue of an alternative international policy for U.S. labour and the contribution such a policy might make to resolving this crisis.

2. International Labour and Trade Union Internationalism.

I stated in the Introduction that the foreign policy conflict in U.S. labour had broader implications for the future direction of the international labour movement. I noted that in recent years international union structures had come under increasing scrutiny due to changes in the world economy and the growing concern to inaugurate a more visible and vibrant trade union internationalism to respond to those changes. This increased scrutiny of international union structures prompted certain radical commentators to conclude that the principal bodies, namely the social democratic ICFTU and pro-Moscow WFTU, were more concerned with fighting the Cold War than with trying to engage the power of the multinationals. For a period radical treatments were largely confined to pointing to what they considered to be a scandalous parody of workers' internationalism wedded to superpower politics and imperialism. More recently scholars such as those associated with the New International Labour Studies (NILS) have taken the discussion further. Their concern has been to construct more theoretically developed

analyses of international workers' organisations and international labour in general. The often-stated concern of NILS writers is to develop a theory and practice for a "New Internationalism."

This thesis has made two distinct contributions to this debate. Firstly, I set out to demonstrate that the "political restructuring" of the relationship between the state and organised labour was, in terms of creating the conditions for a new internationalism, perhaps just as important as economic restructuring and the movement of capital. Secondly, the empirical character of this thesis has permitted a close-range exploration of the process of constructing a new trade union internationalism. Studies of the interrelationships between different national labour movements are extremely rare; this study is perhaps even more unusual in that it has been necessary to describe how fractions of those labour movements have politically related to each other. This has been more complicated and thus more challenging to the reader but reflects, I would argue, a more accurate picture.

Regarding the first contribution, I believe this thesis shows that the behaviour of international capital, and particularly the relocation of investment capital and production from one country to another, are clearly important in terms of creating an urgent and material need for trade union internationalism. However, I stated at the start that similar movements of capital in the past did not generate the same trade union concerns. In the 1950s and 1960s, the

strength of the U.S. economy, prevailing Cold War tensions, the degree of acceptance U.S. labour had won from the U.S. Government and key sections of capital as a result of the postwar social pact and the purge of the CIO Left, as well as the relative success of the capitalist industrialization model in the third world; together these factors created an altogether different political framework for the internationalization of U.S. capital. During this period U.S. labour encouraged U.S. business to go forth into the world and multiply. (See Chapter One)

Present day trade union concern over changes in the world economy is in one sense a measure of the degree of trepidation fomented by the changes themselves and where such changes might ultimately lead, but it is also indicative of the new set of political relationships that have emerged following the end of the postwar consensus. Since the New Deal, the state had been seen as an (albeit inconsistent) co-defender of workers' political and economic rights. The Reagan era saw the partial eclipse of both New Deal industrial relations procedures and Great Society notions of a more equal America. As documented above, the new adversarial relations between U.S. labour, business, and government following the end of the postwar expansion stimulated a section of the labour movement, as well as other liberal political constituencies, to redefine their relationship to other social forces both within the U.S. and beyond. A section of the U.S. labour leadership shifted closer to the Socialist International, thus reversing the

pattern of the early 1950s when the S.I. gravitated towards U.S. government and, by extension, AFL-CIO foreign policy. Underneath the U.S. labour leadership, a new generation of union activists came of age. Many of them had been part of the 1960s anti-war movements and supported national liberation struggles in the Third World.

This process of realignment was reinforced by the failure of liberal capitalist development in regions like Central America and the Caribbean and by concern regarding the direction of U.S. foreign policy after Vietnam. This process was further reinforced by the peculiar elan of the revolutionary movements in Central America as well as in other parts of the world (e.g. South Africa) and their relationships to international religious, environmental, feminist and indigenous peoples' movements. In the U.S. these movements converged into the broader anti-intervention movement which, in turn, penetrated the trade unions.

But not all trade unions. The traditional craft "brotherhood" unions, particularly in the building trades, as well as longshoremen (ILA) and the massive Teamsters union, were by and large impervious to these developments. There is no shortage of explanations as to why this is the case. Liberals are often quick to point out that these unions are predominantly white, well paid, and frequently racist; some openly endorse the Republican Party. Furthermore, many of these unions view political discussion to be antithetical to their stated adherence to "bread-and-butter" unionism. The

conservative political stance and culture of this section of U.S. labour is not, however, fixed in stone. As Chapters Seven and Ten make clear, the foreign policy conflict revealed a noticeable leftward shift in several reputably conservative unions (e.g. CWA).

As I documented above, anti-intervention sentiment resonated most clearly in the white collar unions, particularly teachers (AFT, NEA) and government employees (AFGE, AFSCME). While this can partially be explained by the anxiety created as a result of cuts in public services and the increase in military spending, it also reflects the college-educated and middle class character of the self-named Central America or Anti-Intervention Movement (CA/AIM). However, the movement also made its mark on traditionally blue-collar unions such as the UAW, the steelworkers (USWA), machinists (IAM), and clothing and textile workers (ACTWU), and it was in these unions that anti-intervention sentiment was reinforced by anxieties over jobs, plant closures and runaway shops. As Machinists' union leader William Winpisinger expressed it, "I'll be damned if workers should send their sons to support Texas Instruments in El Salvador..." [63] Unions with a proportionately high number of black and latino members (1199, HERE, SEIU) were also responsive to anti-intervention arguments.

In many unions anti-intervention sentiment evolved into feelings of solidarity for the victims of intervention. Sandinista union officials and representatives of Left

Salvadoran unions (e.g. ANDES, FENASTRAS) were featured in scores of meetings during the 1980s, much to the displeasure of Lane Kirkland. This in turn became converted into political and material support. Thus a dissident internationalism began to take root in U.S. labour. This internationalism, fragile as it was, did not emerge solely or even primarily as a result of changes in the behaviour of capital. It emerged as a result of several processes set in motion by the political restructuring that marked the end of the Keynesian accommodation, and was reinforced by another set of processes triggered by economic and political crises in other parts of the world.

The second contribution this thesis has made to the debate on international trade unionism and internationalism is that its close-range examination of the foreign policy conflict in U.S. labour has highlighted not just the potential for a qualitative shift in the international policies and practices of U.S. labour, it has also identified some of the obstacles that have so far caused this not to occur. I stated above that both economic and political factors and processes generated a nascent new internationalism in U.S. labour. Why, it seems pertinent to ask, has this new internationalism not grown from its present nascent condition into something more developed? It is tempting to attribute this to the seismic developments in the global political landscape following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, and the generally triumphal posture of pro-business and

conservative forces internationally. However, it was clear during the late 1980s that many opportunities to seriously advance a new internationalism for U.S. labour had been missed. As noted throughout this work, the majority of the union leaders who challenged U.S. foreign policy and the multinationals were not prepared to openly criticise Kirkland and the Federation's international affairs apparatus. Neither were they prepared to be the visible protagonists of a new internationalism which consciously forged alliances with militant trade union and political forces in other countries.

There are many reasons for this. Firstly, many of these leaders were only peripherally concerned with foreign policy and were not prepared to split the Federation on this issue. Secondly, to actively encourage links between U.S. labour and militant forces would have led to similar a similar outcome. Moreover, if a new internationalism entailed lending support for the existing Left in places like Central America, this too was unacceptable. These leaders feared the prospect of new regimes being established along the lines of Cuba or Nicaragua, for which they would certainly be castigated as accessories both before and after the fact. The only other option would be to seek to redefine the Left, to build support for a radical alternative both to the Cuban-Sandinista model and the stalled reformism of AIFLD and the Department of State. But, given the weak basis for reforms, this would have been tantamount to advocating an alternative revolutionary strategy or model. Even in the unlikely event that this was

desired, it seems barely feasible that U.S. union leaders could seriously advance this option and simultaneously maintain their generally defencive and non-combative approach to capital in the U.S.

The prospects of constructing a fully developed new internationalism underneath the union leaders, a rank-and-file internationalism, were also not favourable. This is in part due to the political orientation of the solidarity wing of the anti-intervention movement, which viewed itself as an auxiliary to the revolutionary project of the FSLN and FMLN. For these trade unionists, Managua in the 1980s was as significant as Madrid was the radicals of the 1930s; their priority was to build opposition to U.S. policy in the region - a priority encouraged by the FSLN and the Sandinista unions. Trade union tours and delegations to and from Nicaragua created a labour diplomacy designed to pressure the U.S. Government. Indeed, as was discussed in Chapter Six, the FSLN's foreign policy oriented toward the liberal forces in the U.S., the Socialist International, and the Communist leaderships of the then Soviet bloc, as well as forums such as the United Nations and the World Court. A similar approach was adopted by the FDR in El Salvador. Therefore Sandinista and FDR policy sought to win some friends among the leadership of the labour movement. Therefore they, too, did not actively encourage an internationalism that union leaders might view as a challenge from below.

The search for a "New Internationalism" will continue irrespective of the successes and limitations revealed by this short episode in the history of international workers' organisations. If one view has been strengthened by the evidence presented here, it is that which recognises the central importance of ideology in the development of workers' internationalism. The New International Labour Studies writers have displayed a tendency to try to reconstitute the notion of international solidarity as a guiding principle and objective of a new internationalism. Ideology appears to be discussed as a distraction, a contaminant. Perhaps this explains why these writers have focussed more on economic changes than on political changes and movements. To discuss in any meaningful way these movements raises the question of their goals and methods, in short, their ideologies.

The 1990s is likely to see enourmous changes in the ideological profile of the international labour movement. The growing interdependence of the world economy became a principal concern of trade unions in the capitalist world during the 1980s. This concern will surely increase with the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, especially because of the anticipated penetration of those regions by capitalist enterprises. While the peculiarities of Cold War unionism may disappear with the passing of the Cold War itself, workers' organisations will be confronted with a new global situation that will bring with it new sources of conflict as well as new opportunities and reasons for cross-

national unity. The evidence of history strongly suggests that ideology is an inseperable part of the practice of workers' internationalism, left or right, revolutionary, reformist, or conservative. A theory of internationalism that fails to recognise the central place of ideology will, I believe, be of little value to those for those it is intended to influence and assist.

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ACOPAI	Association of Cooperatives of Integrated Agricultural Livestock Products (Asociacion de Cooperativas de Produccion Agropecuaria Integradas)
ACTU	Association of Catholic Trade Unions
ACTWU	Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union
AFGE	American Federation of Government Employees
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
AGEMHA	General Association of Treasury Ministry Employees (Asociacion General de Empleados del Ministerio de Hacienda)
AI	Amnesty International
AIFLD	American Institute For Free Labor Development
ANC	African National Congress
ANDEN	National Association of Nicaraguan Educators (Asociacion Nacional de la Educadores Nicaraguenses)
ANDES	National Association of Salvadoran Teachers (Asociacion Nacional de Educadores Salvadorenos)
ANIS	National Association of Salvadoran Indians (Asociacion Nacional Indigena Salvadorena)
ARENA	Nationalist Republican Alliance (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista)
ASTA	Association of ANTEL Workers of El Salvador (Asociacion Salvadorena de Trabajadores de ANTEL)
ASTTEL	Salvadoran Telecommunications Workers Association (Asociacion Salvadorena de Trabajadores de Telecomunicaciones)
ATANTEL	ANTEL Workers National Associaiton (Asociacion Nacional de Trabajadores de ANTEL) ATC Association of Rural Workers (Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo)
ATRAMSA	Santa Ana Municipal Workers Association (Asociacion de Trabajadores Municipales de Santa Ana)
AUCCTU (USSR)	All Russian Central Council of Trade Unions
BAC	International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen
BPR	Popular Revolutionary Bloc (Bloque Revolucionario

	Popular)
BRAC	Brotherhood of Railway, Airline & Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express & Station Employees
CA/AIM	Central America/Anti-Intervention Movement
CADO	Central America Development Organization
CAHI	Central America Historical Institute
CAUS	Confederation of Action and Labor Union Unification (Central de Accion y Unidad Sindical)
CCL	Canadian Congress of Labor
CCTEM	Coordinating Council of State & Municipal Workers (Consejo Coordinador de Trabajadores Estata las y Municipales)
CDM	Coalition for a Democratic Majority
CDN	Democratic Coordinator of Nicaragua (Coordinadora Democratica de Nicaragua)
CFT	California Federation of Teachers (CFT)
CGIL (Italy)	Genral Federation of Italian Workers (Confederazione Generale de Italiane del Laroro)
CGT (Brazil)	General Confederation of Workers (Central General dos Trabalhadores)
CGT (France)	General Confederation of Workers (Confederation Generale du Travail)
CGT (Nicaragua)	General Confederation of Workers (Confederacion General de Trabajadores)
CGT-i	General Confederation of Workers (Confederacion General de Trabajadores - Independiente)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise
CISSE	Information Center for Salvadoran Trade Unionists (Chicago)
CISPES	Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador
CISTUR	Committee in Support of Trade Union Rights
CLAT	Latin American Workers Federation (Confederacion Latinamericana de Trabajo)
CNUS(Guatamala)	National Centre of United Unions (Central Nacional de Unidad Sindicatos)
COACES	Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (Confederacion de Asociaciones Cooperativas de El Salvador)
COLPROSUMAH	(Colegio Profesional Superior Magisterial Hondureno)
CONATRAL	National Federation of Free Workers (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores Libres)
COPE	Committee on Political Education, AFL-CIO
COSATU	Confederation of South African Trade Unions
COSEP	Superior Council of Private Enterprise (Council Superior de Empresa Privada)
CPDH	Permanent Commission on Human Rights (Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos)
CPSA	Civil & Public Services Association (UK)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America

CPUSTAL	Permanent Congress of Trade Union Unity of Latin America (Congreso Permanente de Unidad Sindical de los Trabajadores de America Latina)
CSN	Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council (Coordinadora Sindical de Nicaragua)
CST (Nicaragua)	Sandinista Workers Central (Central Sandinista de Trabajadores)
CST (El Sal.)	Workers Solidarity Coordinating Council (Coordinadora de Solidaridad de Trabajadores)
CTAL	Latin American Workers Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina)
CTC	Cuban Workers' Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores Cubanos)
CTD	Confederation of Democratic Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores Democatica)
CTN	Workers' Central of Nicaragua (Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua)
CTRP	Republic of Panama Workers' Federation (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Republica de Panama)
CTS	Salvadoran Workers Central (Central de Trabajadores de Salvadorneno)
CTV	Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores Venezuela)
CWA	Communication Workers of America
CUPROCH	Confederation of Chilean Professions
CUS	Council for Union Unification (Consejo de Unificacion Sindical)
CUS	Committee for Trade Union Unity (Comite de Unidad Sindical Salvadorenos)
CUT (Brazil)	Primary Workers Central (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores)
CUT	United Workers' Central (Central Unica de Trabajadores) Chile
CUTS	United Confederation of Workers (Confederacion Unitaria de Trabajadores Salvadorenos)
DIA	Department of International Affairs (AFL-CIO)
DSA	Democratic Socialists of America
EC	Executive Council (AFL-CIO)
ENC	Emergency National Council
ERP	Popular Revolutionary Army (Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo)
FAO	Broad Opposition Front (Frente Amplio)
FAPU	United Popular Action Front (Frente de Accion Popular Unida)
FDN	Nicaraguan Democratic Force (Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense)
FDR	Revolutionary Democratic Front (Frente Democratico Revolucionario)
FENASTRAS	National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (Federacion Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadorenos)
FESINCONSTRANS	Federation of Construction, Transportation & Related Industries (Federacion de Sindicatos de la Industria de la Construccion, Transporte y

	Similares)
FESTIAVTSES	Salvadoran National Trade Union Federation of Workers of the Food, Clothing, Textile, & Related Industries (Federacion Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores de la Industria del Alimento, Vestido, Textil, Similares y Conexos de El Salvador)
FETSALUD	Federation of Health Workers (Federacion de Trabajadores de la Salud)
FKTU	Federation of Korean Trade Unions
FMLN	Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional)
FO (France)	Workers' Force (Force Ouvriere)
FO (Nicaragua)	Workers' Front (Frente Obrero)
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOMCA	Federation of Central American Teachers (Federacion Obreros de Magistariales de Centroamerica)
FPL	Popular Liberation Forces (Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion)
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional)
FSR	Revolutionary Trade Union Federation (Federacion Sindical Revolucionario)
FTUC	Free Trade Union Committee
FTUI	Free Trade Union Institute
FUSS	Unifying Federation of Salvadoran Trade Union (Federacion Unitaria de Sindicatos Salvadorenos)
FUTH	United Federation of Honduran Workers (Federacion Unidad de Trabajadores Hondorenos)
GAO	Government Accounting Office
GCIU	Graphic Communications International Union
HERE	Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees
IAM	International Association of Machinists
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICWU	International Chemical Workers Union
ILA	International Longshoremen's Association
ILGWU	International Ladie's & Garment Workers' Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILWU	International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union
IMAWU	International Molders & Allied Workers Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
IRD	Institute for Religion & Democracy
ISTA	Salvadorena Institute of Agrarian Transformation (Instituto Slavadoreno de Transformacion Agraria)
ITS	International Trade Secretariat/s
IUD	Industrial Union Dept. (AFL-CIO)
IUE	International Union of Electrical Workers
IWA	International Woodworkers of America
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KMU(Philippines)	May First Movement (Kilusang de Mayo Uno)
MAES	Medical Aid to El Salvador
MDR	Democratic Workers' Movement (Movimiento

	Democratico Sindical) Brazil
MNR	National Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario)
MPU	United People's Movement (Movimiento Pueblo Unido)
MUSYGES	Labour Unity Movement of El Salvador (Movimiento Unitario Sindicalista y Gremail de El Salvador)
NALGO	National Association of Local Governement Officers (UK)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCC	National Council of Churches
NEA	National Education Association
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NLC	National Labor Committee (in Support of Democracy & Human Rights in El Salvador)
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NSC	National Security Council
NUHHCE	National Union of Hospital & Health Care Employees (National 1199)
OCAW	Oil Chemical & Atomic Workers
OPD	Office for Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
ORDEN	Nationalist Democratic Organization (Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista)
ORIT	Inter-American Regional Organization of Labor (Organizacion Regionales Inter-americana de Trabajado)
PAFL	Pan American Federation of Labor
PATCO	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization
PCES	Communist Party of El Salvador (Partido Comunista de El Salvador)
PCF	Communist Party of France
PCI	Communist Party of Italy
PCN	National Conciliation Party (Partido Conciliacion de Nacional) El Salvador
PDC	Christian Democratic Party (Partido Democratico Cristiano) El Salvador
PRODEMCA	Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America
PRTC	Central America Revolutionary Workers Party (Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamerica)
PSN	Nicaraguan Socialist Party (Partido Socialista de Nicaragua)
PTTI	International Federation of Postal, Telephone & Telegraph Workers
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RILU	Red International of Labor Unions
RN	National Resistence (Resistencia Nacional)
SAG	Screen Actors Guild
SDUSA	Social Democrats of the United States of America
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SETA	Trade Union of ANDA (Water Authority) Workers

	(Sindicato Empresa de Trabajadores de ANDA)
SI	Socialist International
SIES	Electrical Industry Workers Union (Sindicato de la Industria Electrica de El Salvador)
SIGEBAN	Banking & Savings & Loan General Industry Employees Union (Sindicato de la Industria General de Empleados Bancarios y Asociaciones de Ahorro y Prestamo)
SITAS	Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (Sindicato de Trabajadores Agricultura, Simitares y Conexos Salvadorenos)
SIUNA	Seafarers International Union of North America
SLDN	Salvadoran Labor Defense Network
STECEL	Union of Electrical Workers of the Lempa River (Sindical de Trabajadores de la Comision Ejecutivo Electrico de Rio Lempa)
STISSS	Hospital Workers Union (Sinicato de Trabajadores de I.S.S)
STITAS	Salvadoran Union of Workers of the Textile & Cotton Industry (Sindicato de Empleados y Trabajadores de la Industria Textil y Algodon Salvadorena)
STUS	Union of University Workers (Sindicato de Trabajadores de Universitarios)
SUCEPES	Letter Carrier & Postal Employees Union Society of El Salvador (Sociedad Union de Carteros y Empleados Postales de El Salvador)
SUTC	Construction Workers Union (Sindicato Union de Trabajadores de Constuccion)
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples Association
SWWU	Seamen & Waterfront Workers Union (Grenada)
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TUC	Trades Union Council (Guiana)
TUCP	Trades Union Congress of the Philippines
TUSES	Trade Unionists in Support of El Salvador
TUEL	Trade Union Education League
UAW	United Auto Workers
UCS	Salvadoran Communal Union (Union Comunal Salvadorena)
UDEL	Democratic Union of Liberation (Union Democratica de Liberacion)
UE	United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America
UFCW	United Food & Commercial Workers
UFWA	United Farm Workers of America
UFWA	United Furniture Workers of America
UGT (Portugal)	General Workers Union (Union General dos Trabalhadores)
UMWA	United Mine Workers of America
UNAG	National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos
UNE	National Union of (Public) Employees (Union Nacional Empleados)
UNO	United Nicaraguan Opposition (Unidad Nicaraguense de la Opositora)

UNOC	National Worker Peasant Union (Unidad Nacional Obreros y Campesinos)
UNTS	National Union of Salvadoran Workers (Unidad Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadorenos)
UPD	Popular Democratic Unity (Unidad Popular Democratica)
UPN	Nicaraguan Press Union (Union de Periodistas Nicaraguenses)
USAID	United States Agency For International Development
USWA	United Steel Workers of America
WCL	World Confederation of Labor
WCOTP	World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions